BUSINESS / B1

ADB sees 5.4% growth for RP this year

METRO / A21

World pool champ Alcano charged with child abuse by 14-year-old daughter

SPORTS / A30

Owners want total revamp of Philracom

NEWS / A2

Joselito Cayetano declared nuisance candidate

LIFESTYLE / C1

Class of '07: 2bU! asks grads how much they've changed since high school

Accidental overdose on 9 drugs killed Anna Nicole

DANIA BEACH, FLORIDA—ANNA NICOLE Smith accidentally overdosed on at least nine prescription drugs, including a powerful sleep syrup, after a miserable last few days in which she endured stomach flu, a high fever, pungent sweating and an infection on her buttocks from repeated injections.

In a detailed autopsy report released Monday,

ACCIDENTAL/ A11

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, March 28, 2007 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 110 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Abalos to critics: I am not my brother's keeper

By Jerome Aning and Christian V. Esguerra

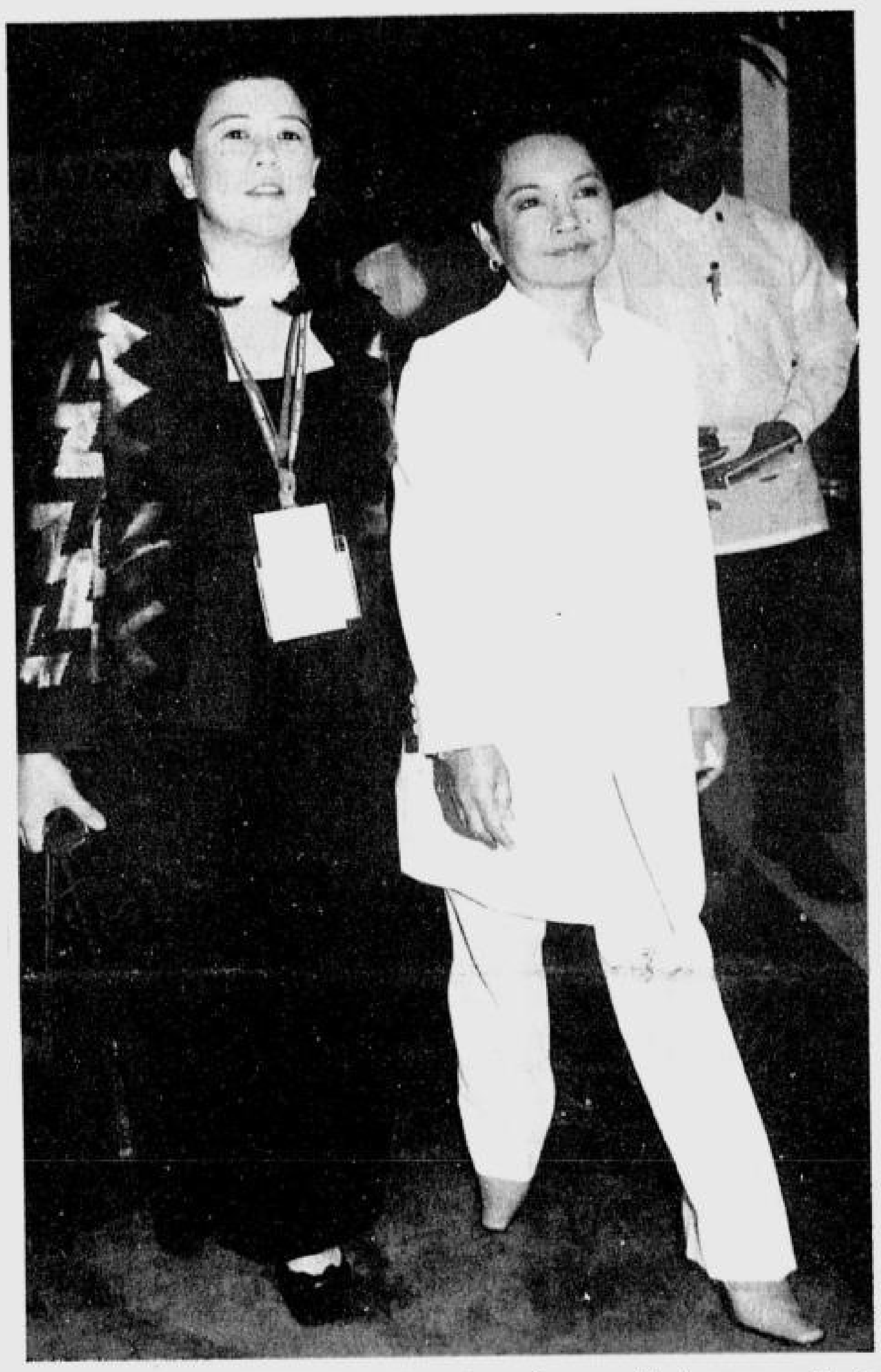
DELICADEZA!

"I AM NOT MY BROther's keeper."

Quoting Cain, Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos

ABALOS/ A16

Bayan Muna tops survey



MEDIA EVENT OF THE YEAR: President Arroyo is escorted by INQUIRER president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez at the opening of the two-day 7th Publish Asia Conference at the Manila Hotel. Organized by Germany-based Ifra, the global organization for newspaper and media publishing, Publish Asia's theme is "Reinventing for Today's Business, Creating for Tomorrow's Challenges." LYN RILLON

SWS: 11 party-list groups may win 17 House seats

DETAINED REP. SATUR OCAMPO'S BAYAN MUNA CONTINUES to lead the party-list race, as its votes surged to 28 percent in March from 19 percent in February, according to the latest nationwide survey by the Social Weather Stations done exclusively for the INQUIRER.

The INQUIRER is the print media sponsor of the March, April and May rounds of the SWS pre-election surveys, which are aimed at tracking voter preferences for the candidates for national positions in the May elections.

The SWS said the increase strongly assured Bayan Muna of "keeping its current three seats."

Bayan Muna is currently represented in the 13th Congress by Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador.

Ocampo is detained at Manila Police District headquarters after he was arrested at the Supreme Court on March 16 for his alleged involvement in the killing of rebels suspected of spying for the military in Leyte more than two decades ago.

The survey was conducted from March 15 to 18 after news of Ocampo's YouTube video and his subsequent arrest made it to the front pages and primetime TV news.

Based on results of the survey that the SWS released exclusively to the INQUIRER, 11 party-list groups could win a total of 17 seats in the House of Representatives.

A group is entitled to a seat in the House if it gets 2 percent of the votes cast for party-list groups. It is entitled to two seats if it gets 4 percent and a maximum of three seats if it gets at least 6 percent.

The survey also showed that nearly six of

BAYAN MUNA/ A16

ELEKSYON 2007

SWS March 2007

PARTYLIST GROUP	Feb* (81 grps)	Mar* (88 grps)
% who voted for a PL group	62.4	57.6
Count of votes for PL (in 000)	28,133	25,928
BAYAN MUNA	18.7	27.6
ANAKPAWIS	10.5	6.2
GABRIELA	8.4	5.8
AANGAT KA PILIPINO	6.2	5.0
AKBAYAN	4.2	3.9
AMIN	2.2	3.0
CIBAC	0.5	2.3
ANAK	1.7	2.3
A TEACHER	1.6	2.2
SUARA	1.3	2.0
AANGAT TAYO	4.4	2.0
APEC	0.8	1.8
AN WARAY	5.5	1.8
PM	1.3	1.6
ABONO	0.3	1.6
BUHAY	0.4	1.6
KABATAAN	1.2	1.5
COOP-NATCCO	1.2	1.5
ANAK MAHIRAP	2.1	1.5
SANLAKAS	0.6	1.5
FPJPM	0.7	1.2
ABA-AKO	2.3	1.2
ASSALAM	0.5	1.1
BABAE KA	1.6	1.1
ABA ILONGGO	1.2	1.0
ANAD	0.7	1.0

* Survey Days: February SWS, Feb 24-27, 07 Inquirer-SWS 2007 Pre-Election Survey March 15-18, 2007

SOURCE: SOCIAL WEATHER STATIONS INFOGRAPHIC: CHONA GALANG, LOUIE BACANI

RETURN OF FAVORITE SON Ex-President Joseph Estrada goes back to San Juan where he began his political career in 1969 as mayor of the city that's now celebrating its centenary. In a 30-minute speech, he flirts with the rules set by the court for his furlough, and also with Guia Gomez (left). JOAN BONDOC

NG BAYAN NG SA
AKHANG MAYNILA

GMA to media: Report good news that unites, inspires

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, whose husband has filed a string of libel suits against journalists, yesterday declared that she respected the freedom of the press and considered differences with the media as "part of our job."

But in the same breath in a speech at the opening ceremony of the 7th Publish Asia conference at the Manila Hotel, she said the media could serve their respective countries well by reporting "the good news that inspire and unite."

The annual conference is a gathering of some 400 chief executive officers, publishers, editors and writers of the leading newspapers in the Asia-Pacific region, including the INQUIRER. It is being held in the Philippines for the first time.

GMA TO MEDIA/ A17

Technology shaking media but papers still in pretty good shape

By Allison W. Lopez

BEING MULTIMEDIA AIN'T BAD news for the dailies, after all.

At the opening yesterday of the Publish Asia conference attended by about 300 executives of newspaper and publishing companies, guest speakers acknowledged that today's media are driven by technology but dispelled fears that this would cause the death of newspapers.

Reiner Mittelbach, CEO of Ifra, the global organization for media pub-

TECHNOLOGY/ A17

Erap talks on Joc-joc, hunger, killings

By Jocelyn R. Uy

SAN JUAN'S FAVORITE SON YESTERDAY set foot on the town plaza for the first time in six years and took advantage of his furlough to rail against the Arroyo administration.

Deposed President Joseph Estrada left his vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal, where he is detained on plunder and perjury charges, to attend the centenary celebration of the family bailiwick and to receive the "Outstanding Citizen of San Juan" award.

He received the award from two of his sons—San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito (by ex-actress Guia Gomez) and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada (by his wife, Sen. Luisa Estrada). Both the deposed President and Jinggoy Estrada are themselves former mayors of San Juan.

The Sandiganbayan Special Division had granted Estrada a 10-hour pass to receive the award and to visit with his mother, Mary Ejercito, at his residence on Polk Street, Greenhills, until 5 p.m.

ERAP TALKS/ A17

Cory expresses alarm over spate of killings

By DJ Yap

FORMER PRESIDENT CORAZON Aquino has expressed alarm over the spate of extrajudicial killings in the country, and indicated international attention to the problem could help put an end to the murders.

Aquino said the killings and the perception of some foreign businessmen that the Philippines was the most corrupt country in Asia were a cause for concern.

"This is something for all Filipinos to worry about," she told reporters after speaking on Monday at a forum at the University of Makati.

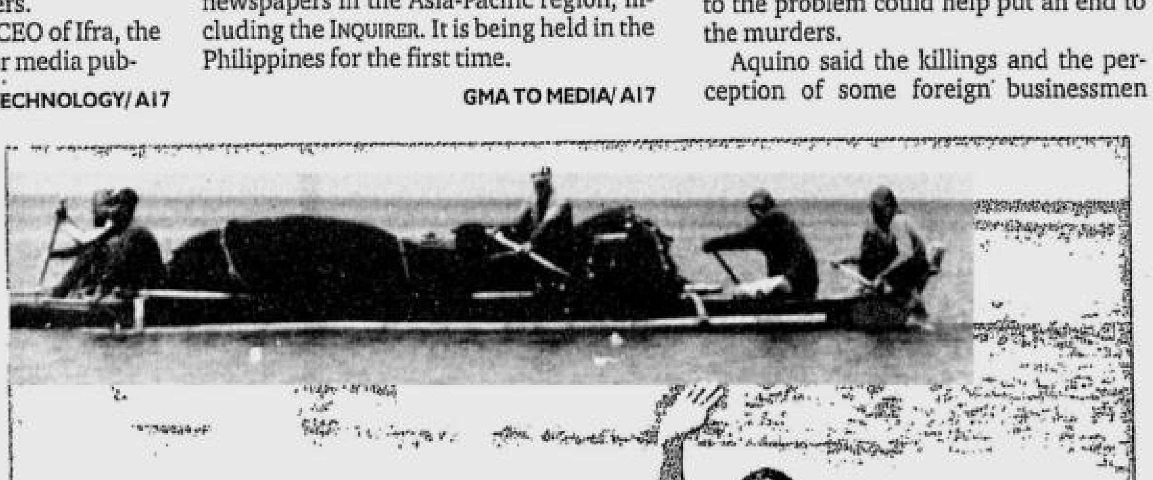
Aquino, who called for the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo at the height of the "Hello Garci" vote-fraud scandal in 2005, said the political killings and the corruption rating should be on people's minds when they choose their leaders in the May 14 elections.

"When election time comes, this is for the voters to keep in mind and choose the best among those who will be presenting themselves to us as our leaders," she said.

Commenting on the political murders,

CORY/ A15

COME IN, WATER'S FINE Senatorial survey topnotcher Loren Legarda finds the clear waters of Caluya Island in Antique irresistible and wades right in. She was guest of honor and speaker at the Tatusan festival which is named after the coconut crab that abounds on the island which Legarda vows she will support to become the next Boracay.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

'No to HR abuses in Asia's most democratic country'

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

AMID THE INTERNATIONAL OUTCRY over the unresolved political killings in the country, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday called the Philippines "the most democratic country" in Asia.

Speaking publicly on the issue for the first time since last February's United Nations inquiry into the murders, Ms Arroyo declared her administration did not tolerate the killing of militants and journalists, and pinned the blame for the murders on communist insurgents.

"The Philippines is the most democratic country in the region. I have no tolerance for human rights violations," Ms Arroyo said in a speech at the Manila Hotel.

Ms Arroyo chose an international audience to defend her handling of the unresolved killings—the 7th Publish Asia conference, the biggest gathering of

NO TO HR/ A15

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern and Southern Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/03/27/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Linggoy's lament: GO eased us out

By Norman Bordadora

A DAY AFTER THE GENUINE OPPOSITION (GO) transferred its headquarters from the modest Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) office on Shaw Boulevard in Mandaluyong City to posh new offices at the Manila Bank building on Ayala Avenue in Makati City, organizational cracks are showing.

PMP campaign leader Linggoy Alcuaz, a veteran of the Fernando Poe Jr. presidential foray in 2004, yesterday threatened to bolt the opposition because he felt "the old hands of the PMP were being eased out" by new campaign manager Serge Osmeña III, who recently took over the post from San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito

Alcuaz, told the INQUIRER that GO spokesperson Adel Tamano, for one, kept from him the details of the GO's first news conference at its new headquarters in Makati City.

"So long as the opposition needs not only Harvard University graduates (like Tamano) but also college dropouts like me, then I'm willing to continue working for (the members of the opposition)," Alcuaz said.

"But if they no longer need my services then I will have to look for teams that do," he added, then went on to ask for the mobile phone number of Team Unity campaign manager Reli German.

Alcuaz made the remarks after reports circulated in political circles that Osmeña fired him from the campaign team.

An Urgent Appeal to the President, Congress, the Business Sector & Our People

April 16 is the deadline for the filing of income tax returns and payment of taxes.

THERE IS AN URGENT NEED:
- To once and for all stamp out graft and corruption
- For Congress to enact a final Tax Amnesty Law
- To plug loopholes in the Value Added Tax Law (VAT)

1. STAMP OUT GRAFT

- Government must stamp out, once and for all, GRAFT and CORRUPTION, SMUGGLING, TAX EVASION, INFLUENCE PEDDLING and BRIBERY.
- Government must pursue without letup, just as it has promised two years ago, the campaign to go after and prosecute tax evaders and smugglers under its RATE (Run After Tax Evaders) and RATS (Run After The Smugglers) programs. Success will erase the image of the BIR and Customs as among the most corrupt government agencies for the past 50 years.
- Both the Business Sector & Government must work together to EXPAND the tax base.

2. PASS A FINAL TAX AMNESTY LAW

The COPW is in favor of Congress adopting this July a FINAL TAX AMNESTY with the following features:

a. Creating an independent regulatory body that will ensure compliance of the "Tax Amnesty Law".
b. Only those who comply with the following conditions can avail themselves of the amnesty.
  - Submission of the latest Income Tax Return (ITR), Statement of Assets and Liabilities, and Statement of Income and Expenses filed with the BIR.
  - Confidentiality of client information must be waived so that the bank can verify with the BIR the authenticity of the submitted ITR.

These requirements are contained in Central Bank Circular 472 under the late BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura before banks can grant loans to their clients.

3. PLUG LOOPHOLES IN THE VAT LAW by:

- Requiring the BIR to invest heavily in computerization. At present only 43% of its operations are computerized, resulting in a VAT leakage of as high as 60%.
- The issuance of a NEW computer generated Tax Identification Number (TIN) that will replace all existing TINs manually-generated and largely fictitious.
- In order to ensure tax audit compliance, all transactions will simultaneously require a TIN and Invoice VAT No. of establishments before they are validated.
- Computerization of tax mapping of properties in all regions nationwide.
- Use of water-marked invoices which shall be issued centrally by the Department of Finance-BIR working in tandem with the private Business Sector.
- Benchmarking of the maximum input tax allowed for each industry or business subsector in computing the VAT.
- Dynamic linking of BIR and Customs computers to check immediately any misdeclaration and undervaluation of imported goods.

For online posting of COPW issues, log on to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/COPW/

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The other Cayetano booted out

By Jerome Aning and Norman Bordadora

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS' First Division yesterday disqualified Joselito "Pepito" Cayetano of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan from the senatorial race, questioning his capability to mount a nationwide campaign.

"He's virtually unknown and yet he's running for a lofty position. How can he wage a national campaign?" Commissioner Romeo Brawner, author of the decision, said.

Brawner said the Comelec learned that Cayetano was a clerk in a stevedoring firm in Davao City making P10,000 a month and was not a marine engineer as he had claimed in his certificate of candidacy.

He said Cayetano's candidacy basically hinged on his nomination by the KBL. But KBL leader Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., son of the late strongman and party founder Ferdinand Marcos, had disowned Cayetano as well as the other KBL candidates including lawyer Oliver Lozano.

Joselito's candidacy was questioned by Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano, who is running for senator under the Genuine Opposition.

Mike A's hand

Alan charged that Joselito was being used by Jose Miguel Arroyo, President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband, to confuse the electorate and derail his candidacy for senator.

This after Alan accused Arroyo of having secret bank accounts in Germany on the floor of the House. Arroyo denied the charge and flew to Germany to get a certification from the bank saying he did not have any accounts.

The 27-page decision has not yet been officially released but the first division's presiding chair, Commissioner Resurreccion Borra, confirmed to reporters that the decision was unanimously reached by himself, Brawner and Commissioner Rene Sarmiento.

Borra said Joselito may file a motion for reconsideration within five days or elevate the case to the commission en banc—the poll body sitting as a whole. He may later take the case to the Supreme Court, Borra said.

Until a final resolution of the case, Borra said Joselito would remain on the list of official candidates, election returns and other poll documents.

If the case is unresolved by election day, Borra said votes cast for Cayetano and Peter Cayetano would be considered strays.

Alan Peter Cayetano hailed the Comelec decision yesterday.

"Of course, we thank God and the Comelec for not allowing itself to be pressured," Alan told the INQUIRER in an interview.

He said he remained wary, however, after he "received information the operators of [Mike Arroyo] were very upset... Their instructions were to have me disqualified or have two (Cayetanos) run in the elections."

Abalos won't go to Mindanao

By Jerome Aning

CITING INSINUATIONS THAT HE WAS "FIXing things" in Mindanao, Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said he was letting go of the island as his area of responsibility during the elections.

"I have received a lot of bad perceptions. So to allay the fears and suspicions of some people that Comelec was going to cheat because of my being assigned to Mindanao, I'm excusing myself from being its commissioner-in-charge," Abalos told reporters in a press conference.

The chair said he would turn over Mindanao to the three newest Comelec Commissioners.

Regions 11 (Davao) and 12 (Soccskargen) will be turned over to Commissioner Romeo Brawner while Region 13 (Caraga) and Region 10 (Northern Mindanao) would be placed under Commissioner Nicodemo Ferrer.

Commissioner Rene Sarmiento, meanwhile, will return to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and Region 9 (Zamboanga Peninsula).

The chair went to Mindanao the other week to inspect election preparations and meet election officers, local authorities and watchdogs.

Real poll survey is on May 14, says Palace

By Michael Lim Ubac

UNFLUSTERED BY THE POOR showing of the administration's senatorial candidates in the latest survey, Malacañang yesterday cautioned the Genuine Opposition against relying on polls, saying it was too early to celebrate.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said President Macapagal-Arroyo believed "the most important survey is the one on May 14. That's the only survey that will count and we wish all the candidates well."

Bunye said the President was not disturbed at all that the Team Unity candidates were trailing the GO bets despite its much-vaunted machinery and clout.

"The President is very focused on what she needs to do as President and that's to concentrate on the economy and the President won't be distracted from this main objective," Bunye said.

Only four Team Unity candidates figured in the "magic 12" in the latest Social Weather Stations survey of voter preferences for senator—reelectionists Edgardo Angara, Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto and former Senate Minority Leader Tito Sotto.

The survey showed GO candidates Loren Legarda (58 percent) and Senate President Manuel Villar (57 percent) leading all bets with reelectionist Sen. Panfilo Lacson (42 percent), Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero (40 percent) and Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano (39 percent) in 4th to 6th place.

Other GO candidates "statistically in contention" were Tarlac Rep. Benigno Aquino III, former Sen. John Osmeña and Aquilino Pimentel III.

"We can see the trend. We started from below and we're inching up," Bunye said.

Team Unity, meanwhile, advised GO to direct its new campaign slogan at former President Joseph Estrada, its purported chief proponent, who is in detention awaiting the verdict in his plunder trial.

Team Unity media director Gov. Ben Evardone yesterday said that if there was a new joke in the campaign, it was GO's new slogan, "*Kontra nakawan, sagot sa kahirapan*(Against corruption, the answer to poverty)."

"Team Unity finds it ironic, out-of-this-world rather, that GO made anticorruption its main campaign theme, considering the tangled web of corruption that brought down the Estrada presidency and the malingering effect of such acts on the reputation of the country," Evardone said.

He said GO "conveniently missed the point that the country's reputation for corruption is mostly rooted in unresolved high-profile corruption cases, principally the plunder charge against Estrada. This holier-than-thou attitude will have a severe backlash on the opposition candidates as voters will see in ousted President Estrada the highest personification of official corruption."

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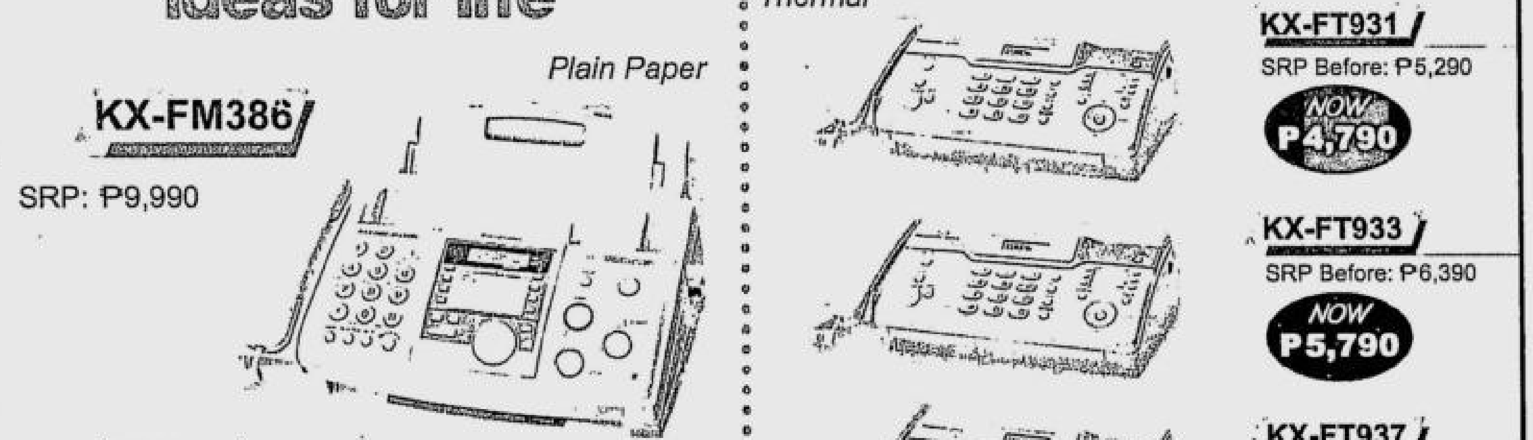

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Sequential Broadcast	20 locations	20 locations	20 locations	20 locations	20 locations	20 locations	20 locations
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Water will be cheaper this summer, if there's any

By TJ Burgonio

WATER RATES WILL BE LOWERED THIS summer.

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS). announced yesterday that it has directed concessionaires Manila Water Company Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. to reduce their water rates from April to June in view of the improved foreign exchange rate.

MWSS chief regulator Eduardo Santos said that both Manila Water and Maynilad will lower charges for their foreign currency differential adjustment (FCDA), a component of the water bill, by P.16 per cubic meter because of the continued appreciation of the peso against the dollar.

Manila Water consumers would save 28 centavos per cubic meter, and Maynilad customers, 30 centavos per cubic meter.

The reduction takes effect April 1 for Manila customers in the east zone of the metropolis, and April 5 for Maynilad customers in the west zone.

FCDA is a tariff mechanism that is adjusted upwards to recover losses if the peso depreciates, and downwards if the local currency appreciates against other currencies. It is adjusted on a quarterly basis, depending on the trend of the peso value.

Meanwhile, officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources have warned that a fresh water shortage would be felt in Central Luzon in the next five years, becoming severe by 2025, if conservation measures are not put in place today.

Citing research by University of the Philippines-Los Baños forestry scientists, DENR regional executive director Regidor de Leon said the demand for fresh water in Region III would rise to twice its potential supply of 12.5 million cubic meters in the next 20 years.

De Leon pointed to overpopulation, pollution from the indiscriminate dumping of garbage and the over-extraction of ground water as the main factors for the shortage.

"If we cannot address the environmental problems today, we will experience a far greater water crisis in the next two decades," De Leon said.

The Pantabangan and Angat dams in Nueva Ecija and Bulacan, the two major sources of water for Central Luzon are threatened by siltation caused by the degradation of the forests surrounding their watersheds, according to Perla Collado, DENR public affairs chief.

Pantabangan and Angat irrigate 130,000 hectares of farmlands in Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Pampanga and Bulacan, and churn out a combined 500 megawatts of power to the Luzon grid, Collado said.

Angat is the only source of domestic water for at least 10 million Metro Manila residents, but the water in the dam now stands at 199 meters, below the safe level of 206 meters. This translates to 132 million cubic meters of less water in the dam.

Potable water for Pag-asa

By Christine O. Avendaño

SOLDIERS RESIDING ON PAG-ASA ISLAND, located in the disputed Kalayaan Group of Islands (KIG), will have access to potable drinking water starting this week.

Defense officials led by Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., will visit Pag-asa Island tomorrow bringing with them a mobile water treatment plant for the soldiers' use. This shows the government's commitment to stay on Pag-asa, one of nine islands in the KIG, under possession of the Philippines.

"This also shows we are taking care of those who take care of our security," said Ebdane referring to the soldiers tasked to guard the island.

The P13-million water treatment plant was donated by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and turned over to Ebdane during simple rites at the La Mesa Dam in Quezon City.

The three-tonner mobile water plant will be loaded on a C-130 plane scheduled to fly tomorrow to Pag-asa Island.

According to MWSS principal engineer Jose Alfredo Escoto Jr., the plant is capable of treating sea water, brackish water or surface water.

Both Ebdane and AFP Western Command Admiral Tirso Danga said Pag-asa had brackish water which had a "certain degree of salinity" or the water tends to be salty.

Soldiers and island residents boil water to make it potable.

"[The equipment] will help our soldiers on Pag-asa and the other islands get water on a regular basis," Ebdane said.

The mobile water plant could treat 1,000 liters of sea water per hour and 2,000 liters of brackish water per hour, Escoto said.

He added that it would be cheaper to use the treatment plant than to import potable water to the island.

Escoto said the mobile water plant was the second unit to be used in the country. MWSS installed one unit in Bicol to help with relief operations after typhoon "Reming" caused massive destruction in the region.

Police want guns seized from rebels

By Alcuin Papa

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE officials yesterday asked the military not to burn guns seized from communist and Moro rebels but to instead hand them down to policemen—many of whom lack fire power.

"It would be a waste to just burn these guns," Director Wilfredo Garcia, chief of the PNP's Directorate for Operations Chief, told reporters in Camp Crame yesterday.

Following prevailing policy, the AFP has already burned around a thousand of these contraband guns which were seized from communist New People's Army rebels, members of the extremist Abu Sayyaf and other private armed bands.

The PNP official said the 118,000-strong police force would gladly accept and use the seized rebel guns. A new batch is scheduled to be destroyed.

Garcia said he already made the request to Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane who said he would consider turning over 53,805 seized firearms to the PNP.

The seized firearms would greatly help the PNP's security and counterinsurgency operations, said Garcia, noting that 20 percent of the police force lacks long firearms. The PNP is also in the middle of a five-year intensive recruitment program that targets 15,000 new policemen.

Garcia said he sees nothing wrong with the PNP using guns which were once used by so-called "enemies of the state."

"What's important now is we have something to use," he said.

Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan, police commander for Region 3, seconded the motion, saying it did not really matter where the guns came from.

Central Mindanao police commander Chief Supt. Felizardo Serapio also agreed. He said the additional firearms would help his men tighten security in his region, which is a frequent target of terrorist bombings.

Garcia stressed that most of the weapons at one time belonged to the State but fell into the hands of rebels during encounters and raids on military or police detachments, and other tactics under the rebels' '*agaw-armas*' (wresting arms from the government) strategy.

The situation we have now is apparently a case of reverse "*agaw-armas.*"

Corrections

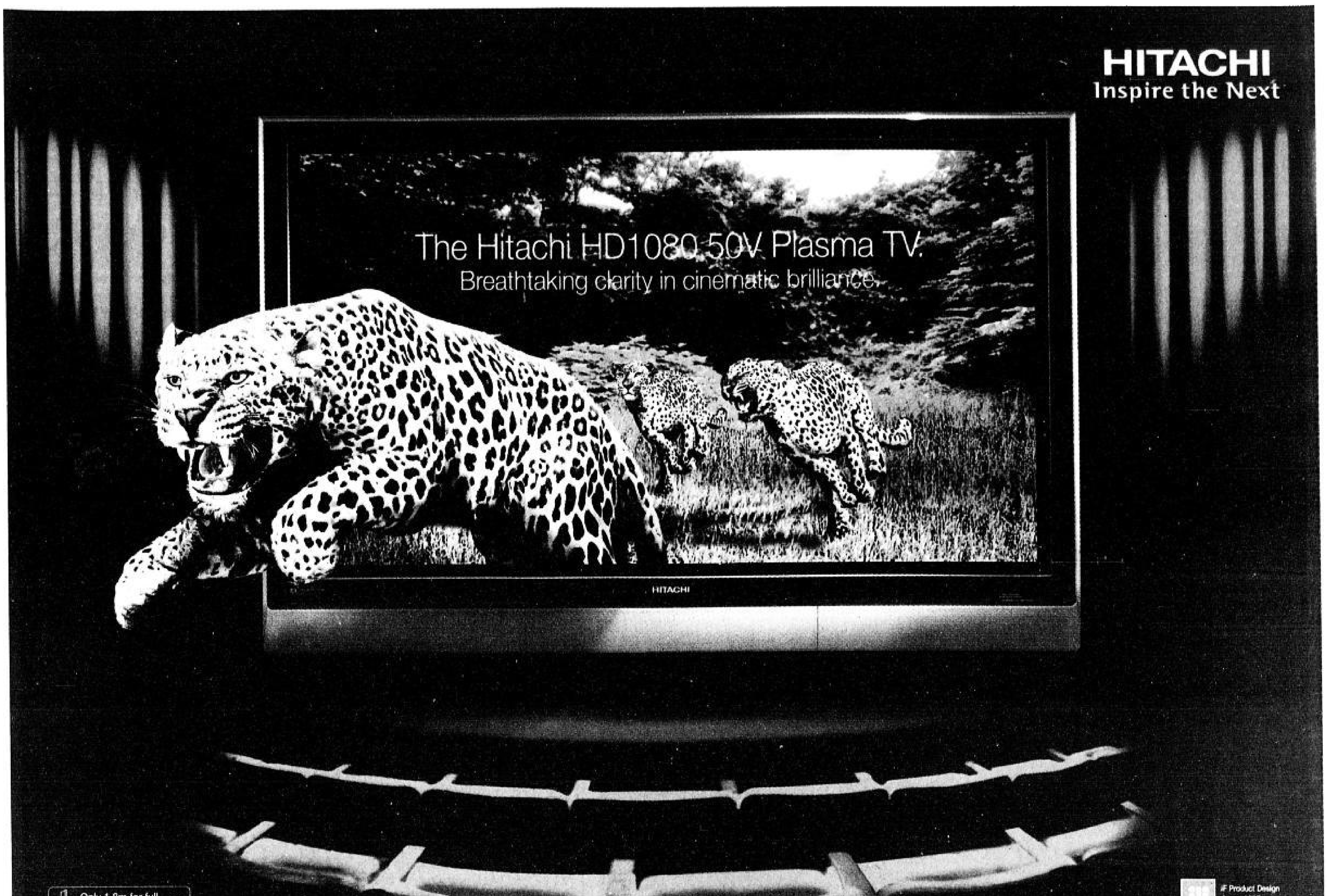
IN THE FEB. 4 ISSUE, the word "sought" was inadvertently dropped from the headline of a story on Page C-3 of the Lifestyle section —"Int'l recognition for Pasig school." The headline should have read, "Int'l recognition sought for Pasig school." The Second Mom Preschool is still in the process of filing an application with the International Baccalaureate Organization for Authorization and Recognition.

* * *

IN THE MARCH 23 ISSUE, a front-page story —"Party-list or employment agency?"— misspelled the surname of a former senator. The correct spelling of the former senator's name is Ernesto Herrera—not Herrara—Jr.

* * *

IN THE MARCH 27 ISSUE, an Across the Nation story on Page A14—"2 Cojuangco women face off in Tarlac" — misstated the surname of the wife of Tarlac Rep. Gilberto Cojuangco Teodoro Jr. The name of the congressman's wife is Monica "Nikki" Prieto-Teodoro—not Prieto-Cojuangco. The same story misstated that former Tarlac Gov. Margarita "Tingting" Cojuangco served as governor from 1995 to 1998. Tingting Cojuangco started her term in 1992.



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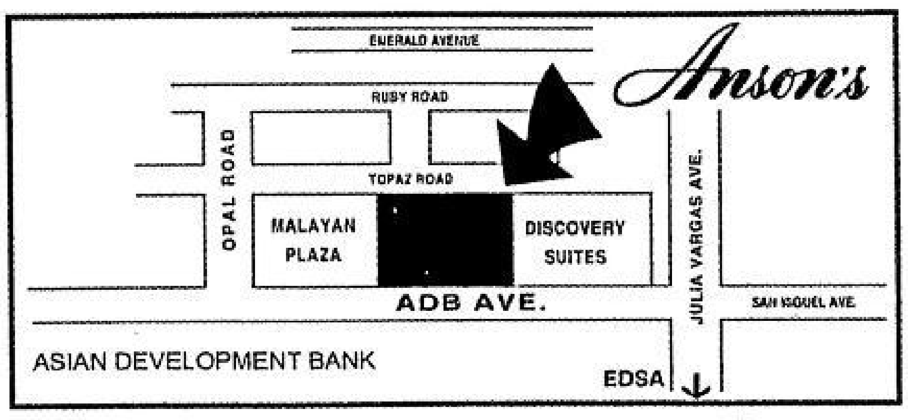

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WHO exercise to test bird flu readiness in Asia

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION and Asian partners will conduct their first test of how rapidly they can contain the first signs of a pandemic, using a mock scenario of a human bird flu outbreak in Cambodia, WHO said yesterday.

The exercise "Panstop 2007," slated for Monday and Tuesday, involves a simulated scenario in which the influenza drug Tamiflu and personal protective equipment, like goggles and masks, are dispatched to Cambodia from a Japan-donated stockpile in Singapore.

The secretariat of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the governments of Japan and Cambodia, and the Japan International Cooperation System will take part in the drills, which will be held at the WHO's Western Pacific regional office in Manila.

The drills will begin with the simulated discovery in Cambodia of a deadly H5N1 strain of the virus with pandemic potential, triggering a chain of events leading to the regional director in Manila, Dr. Shigeru Omi, telephoning ASEAN to recommend the release of some of the Tamiflu supplies and protective equipment to the outbreak zone.

"It will be the first time that plans to respond rapidly to signs of a pandemic and to snuff it out will have been tested," a WHO statement said.

WHO spokesman Peter Cordingley said no supplies will actually be moved during the exercise, which will involve imagining the medicines and supplies being loaded onto a plane in Singapore to Phnom Penh, and clearing customs in Cambodia's capital.

"Basically, we will test communications. When we tell customs it's coming in, who will be ready to receive it, what are the procedures to get it through on the trucks and out into the field," he added. *AP*

DOH exec fired for spoilage of P6.5M worth of polio drugs

By Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY FIRED FROM government service a ranking health official for the spoilage of some P6.5 million worth of oral polio vaccine in 2004 that deprived newly born infants in the country of one of their most important vaccines that could save them from paralysis, or worse, death.

The Office of the President affirmed the recommendation of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) to fire Carolina P. Herradura, director for procurement and logistics service of the Department of Health (DOH).

The reason: Gross negligence of duty and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service which resulted in the spoilage of 70,384 vials of Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) amounting to P6.5 million.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, by authority of the President, signed the decision approving the dismissal of Herradura on March 26 "with the corresponding penalties of cancellation of eligibility, forfeiture of leave credits and retirement benefits and the disqualification for reemployment in the government service."

"We cannot tolerate this kind of irresponsibility. Just because of gross negligence of an official, thousands of newly born infants were deprived of one of the most important vaccines that could prevent their possible hospitalization, or even save them from death and millions of government fund were put to waste," said PAGC Chair Constancia de Guzman.

De Guzman found Herradura to have "caused undue injury to the government by failing to discharge her duties as the Director of the Procurement and Logistics Service of DOH and as Chairperson of the Logistics Sub-Committee of National Immunization Committee."

In her defense, Herradura denied the charges against her and argued that while the Materials Management Division of DOH was under her overall supervision, she could not be held liable for the spoilage of the OPV vials for there were personnel who were directly responsible for the proper handling, adequate storing and timely distribution of said vaccines.

But the PAGC team did not accept the reasoning of Herradura and found her remiss of her duties and responsibilities.

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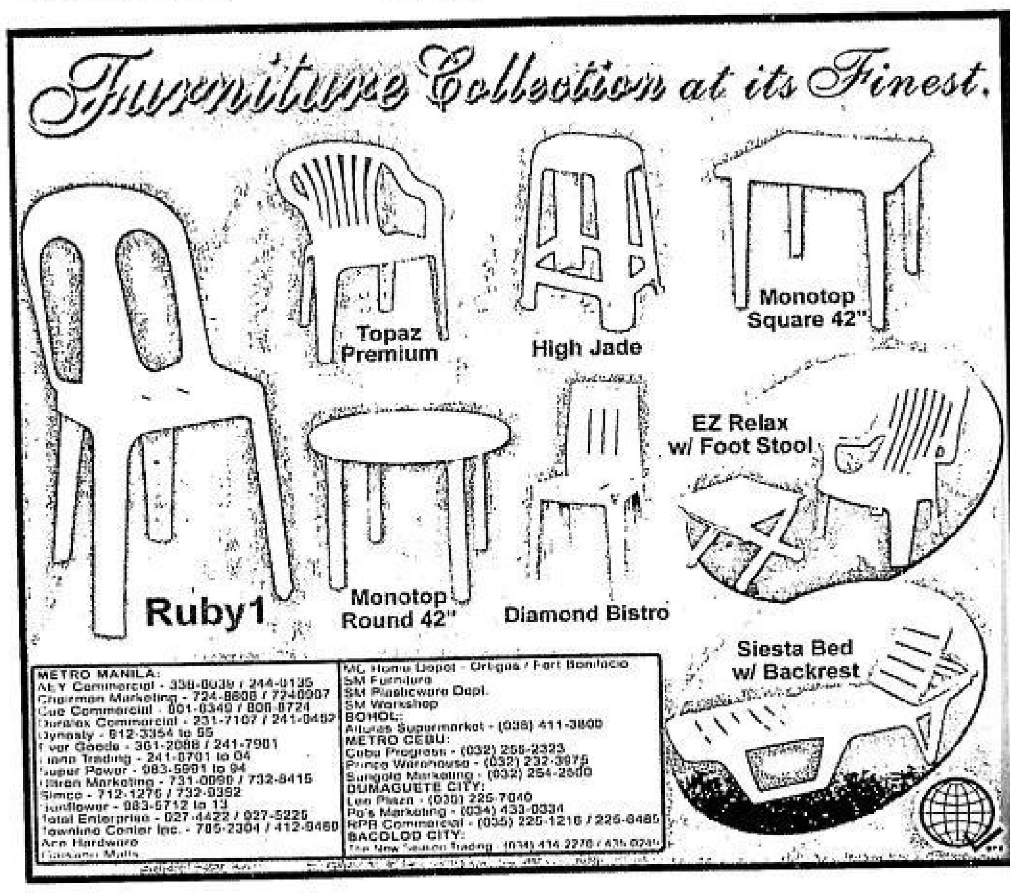

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If you can't stand soldiers in barangay, get out, militants told

By Christine O. Avendaño

ADMITTING THAT IT WAS "ACTUALLY a war for the hearts and minds (of the people)," Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. yesterday told militant groups to get out of the 26 depressed Metro Manila barangays where soldiers are stationed if they could not stand their presence.

At the same time, Ebdane urged Catholic bishops opposed to the soldiers' presence to go to the barangays to see for themselves the real situation "on the ground."

"This is actually a war for the hearts and minds (of the people)," Ebdane told reporters. "In any struggle, whoever has their hearts and minds is the winner."

Ebdane the other day rejected calls by militant groups and a Catholic bishop to have the troops recalled, saying the government would only do so if the barangay residents themselves clamored for it.

The government, he said, had a "moral obligation.. to take care of its people" and this was "one approach."

He said that since the soldiers' deployment, the barangay residents came to realize that the government was doing something for them.

"It's not in the interest of the leftists if the people fully support the government," Ebdane said.

He said the residents were appreciative of the medical missions and civil action work being conducted by the soldiers, whose deployment was part of their training.

"Who are the ones complaining? Aren't they those not from those areas? Why don't they leave?" Ebdane said in Filipino.

He said the deployment was under review but it was more for "improving" the training program.

The civil-military training program has been going on the past two years and it so happened that the elections were coming in May, he said, reiterating that the soldiers were not in the barangays to intimidate party-list candidates and voters.

Militant groups had charged that the soldiers were scaring residents into not voting for left-leaning party-list candidates in the coming polls.

These groups, he said, should leave because, in the first place, they were not residents of the barangays.

He then urged Catholic bishops who had raised concerns over the military presence to go to the barangays so they could "validate" what was happening "on the ground."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, March 28, 2007
5th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Dn 3:14-20, 91-92, 95
Gospel: John 8:31-42

Jesus went on to say to the Jews who believed in him: "You will be my true disciples if you keep my word. Then you will know the truth and the truth will make you free." They answered him, "We are the descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves of anyone. What do you mean by saying: You will be free?"

Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave. But the slave doesn't stay in the house forever; the son stays forever. So, if the Son makes you free, you will be really free.

"I know that you are the descendants of Abraham; yet you want to kill me because my word finds no place in you. For my part I speak of what I have seen in the Father's presence, but you do what you have learned from your father."

They answered him, "Our father is Abraham." Then Jesus said, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do as Abraham did. But now you want to kill me, the one who tells you the truth—the truth that I have learned from God. That is not what Abraham did; what you are doing are the works of your father."

The Jews said to him, "We are not illegitimate children; we have one Father, God." Jesus replied, "If God were your Father you would love me, for I came forth from God, and I am here. And I didn't come by my own decision, but it was he himself who sent me."

Commentary

The three friends refuse to obey the king and refute him saying our God can save us but if he chooses not to, we will still be faithful. The king throws them into the furnace with rage and yet they are not harmed. They walk about in the furnace, with one who looks like a son of God (a word for a prophet, one close to God) and they are freed. They disobeyed the command of power and handed over their bodies, refusing to worship any idol. This is the place we stand today. Do we worship idols: the gods of war, commerce, aggression, fear, terror, insecurity, money, power, our own drives?

Are we truly the disciples of Jesus, freed by the Truth? Are we slaves to sin or does Jesus' word find a place in us? Do we succumb to the powers around us or do we obey Jesus' Father and follow him, even unto death, worshipping God alone, whether we are saved physically from harm or not? Do we love Jesus?

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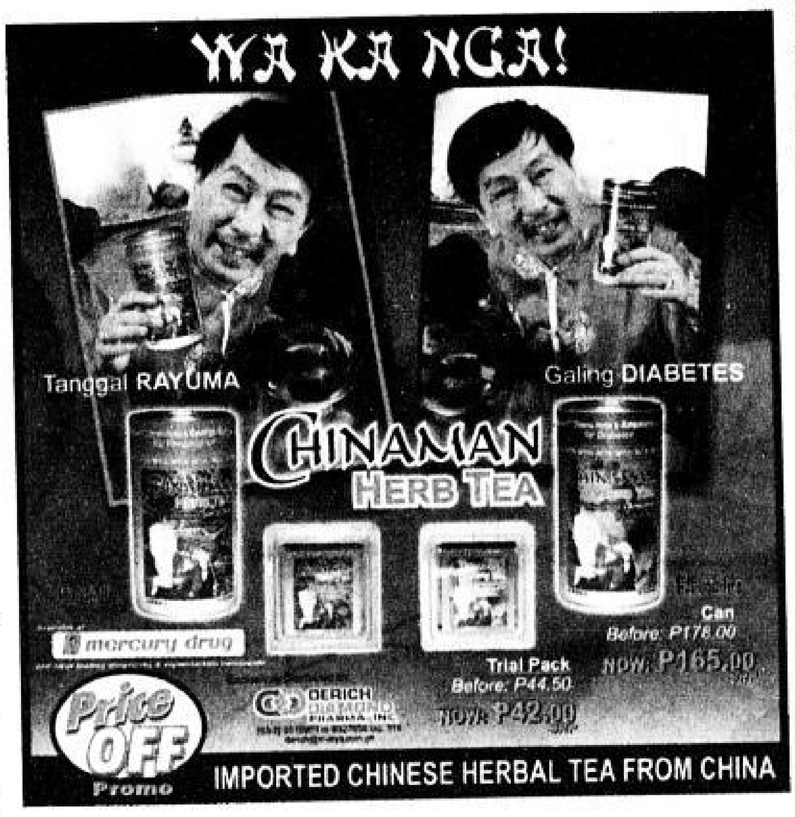
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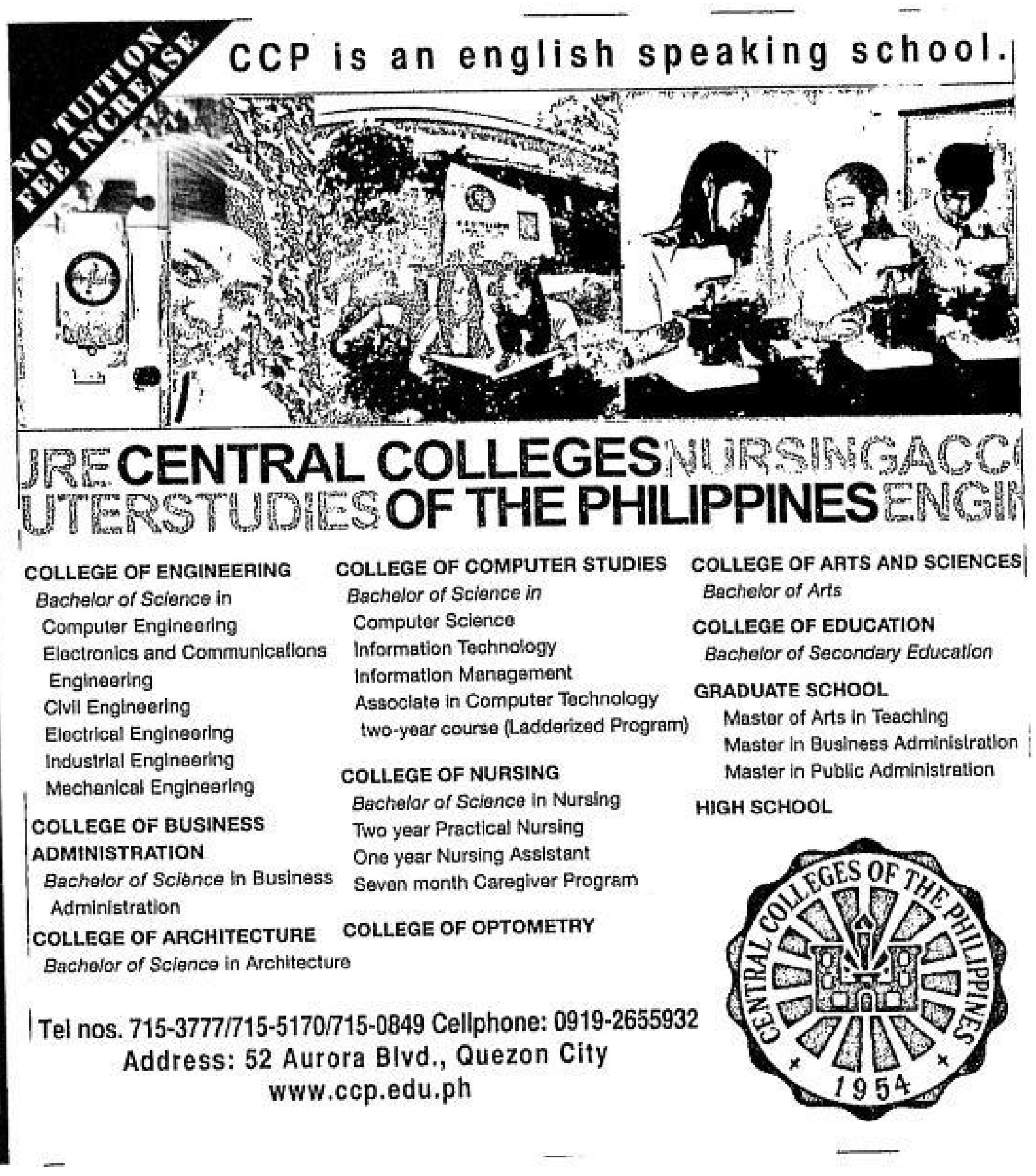
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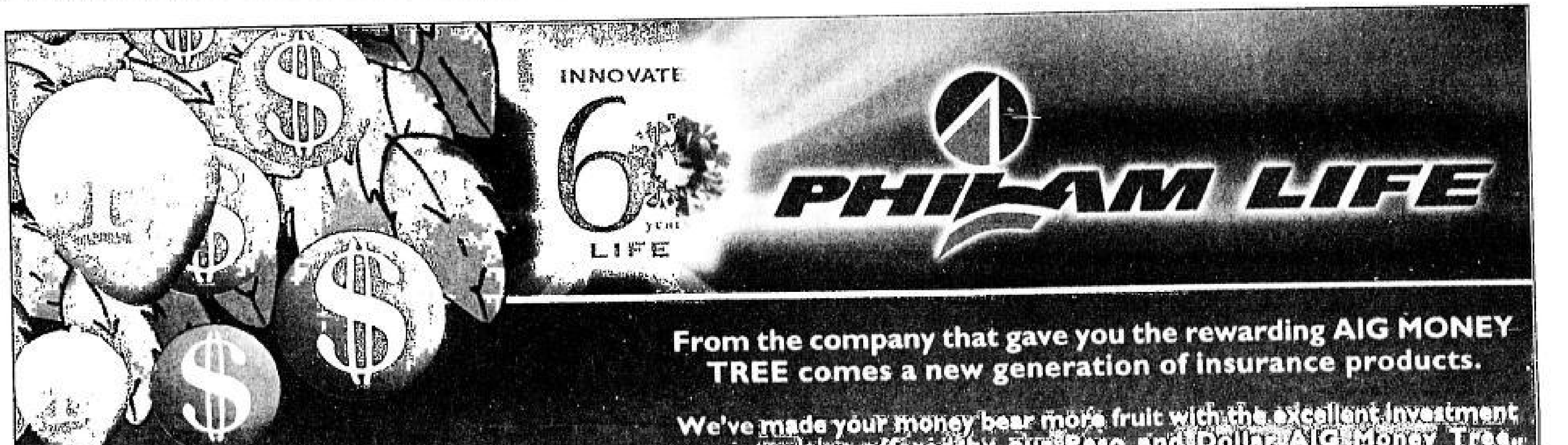
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Recruiter to continue hiring nurses despite US row

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE US-BASED SENTOSACARE will continue to recruit nurses from the Philippines, despite the company's ongoing legal battle with Filipino nurses who allegedly left their jobs in health care facilities in New York City.

"We still have great confidence in Filipino nurses. We've had very good experience with many Filipino nurses. They are hardworking when they come to America. And they are able to climb the corporate ladder. We take great pride in that," said SentosaCare's chief operating officer Bent Philipson in a press conference yesterday.

In September last year, 28 Filipino nurses alleged that they were duped into working in hospitals in New York City without receiving the pay and benefits that the Sentosa Recruitment Agency (SRA), SentosaCare's local counterpart, had promised them.

The nurses, most of whom were licensed doctors in the Philippines (including medical board topnotcher Elmer Jacinto), filed a complaint with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and with the National Labor Relations Commission that led to the suspension of SRA's license.

A month later, the suspension was lifted. In a privilege speech, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. named former Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor as SRA's *padrino* (godfather).

Meanwhile, several nursing home employers in New York filed labor and administrative complaints against the 28 Filipinos for not honoring their contracts and endangering the lives of the patients they left behind.

Of the 28 Filipino nurses who left their jobs, 10 have pleaded not guilty to conspiracy and child endangerment charges, including Jacinto.

According to Philipson, the 28 nurses who left the health care facilities are only a small portion of the many Filipino nurses that SentosaCare has successfully placed in the United States.

He also defended Defensor who was criticized for having intervened on behalf of SentosaCare.

Philipson said SentosaCare officials only wrote to President Macapagal-Arroyo because the Philippine consul officials in New York refused to listen to their side. The letter was referred to Defensor.

SentosaCare officials claimed that they asked Consul General Cecilia Rebong to conduct an investigation of the incident and to talk to other Filipinos. However, Rebong refused to heed their request.

In spite of what happened, Philipson said SentosaCare would continue to focus on recruiting nurses only from the Philippines. The company also refused to be affected by the recent controversy on the leakage in the nursing licensure exam.

Philipson said it was up to Philippine officials to resolve any issue and SentosaCare would abide by their decision.

Francis Luyun, SRA chief executive officer, said the agency was not suffering from any backlash from the controversy stirred by the 28 Filipino nurses.

There is no dearth of applicants, Luyun said.

There are 450 nurses in the Philippines awaiting deployment to the United States. They are just waiting for their visa, he added.

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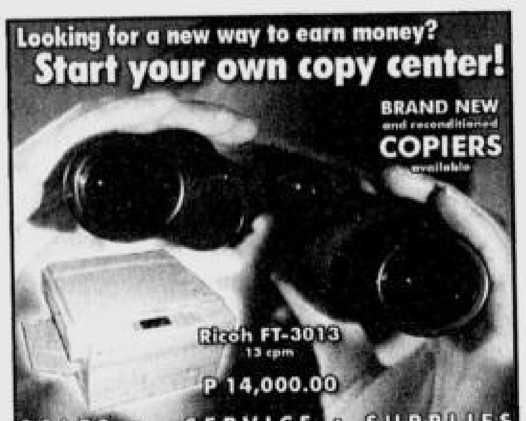
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Mr. Secretary:

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Hence, Mr. Secretary, we are greatly puzzled by your policy somersault, reversing the earlier position taken by DTI and contradicting the findings of the Tariff Commission! What is the logic behind your decision declaring the safeguard tariff measure as injurious to public interest? Are we sacrificing another Philippine industry in the name of unbridled economic liberalization? Are we supporting the creation of jobs in other countries?

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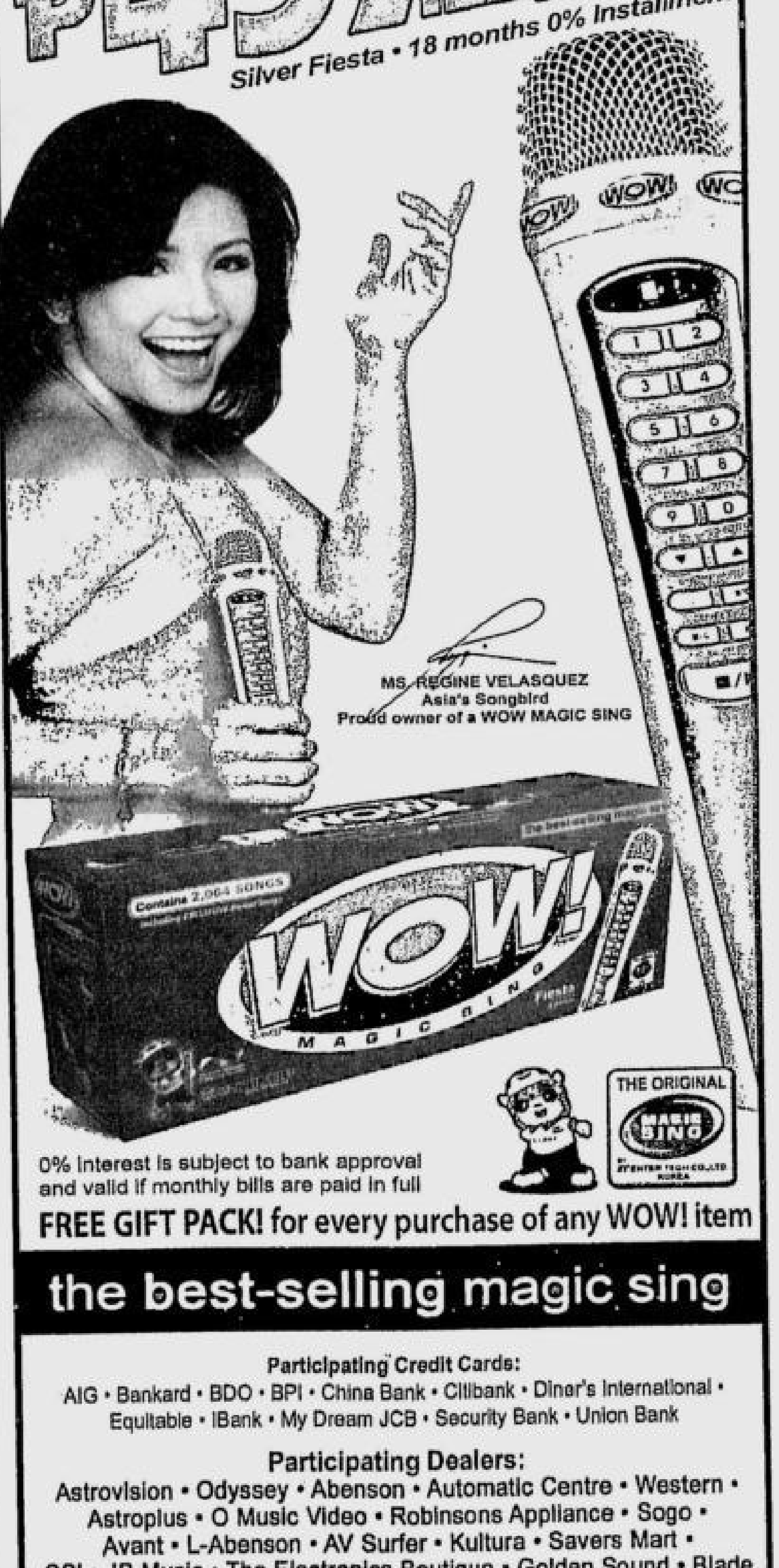
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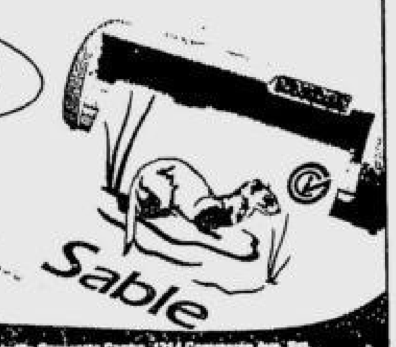

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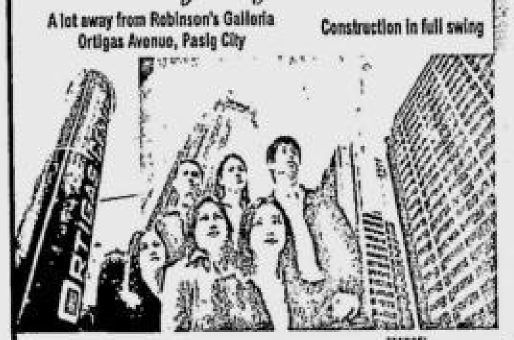

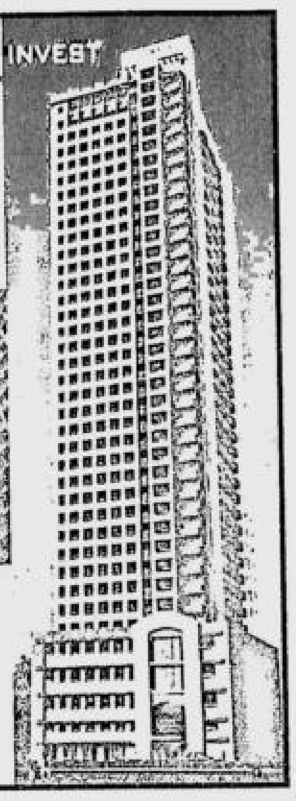

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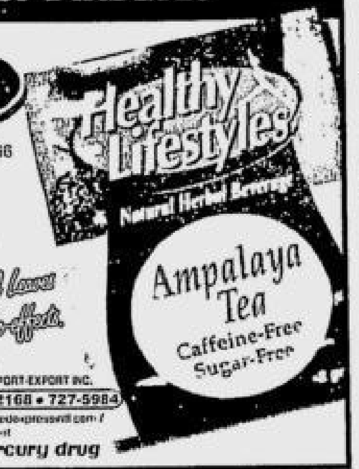
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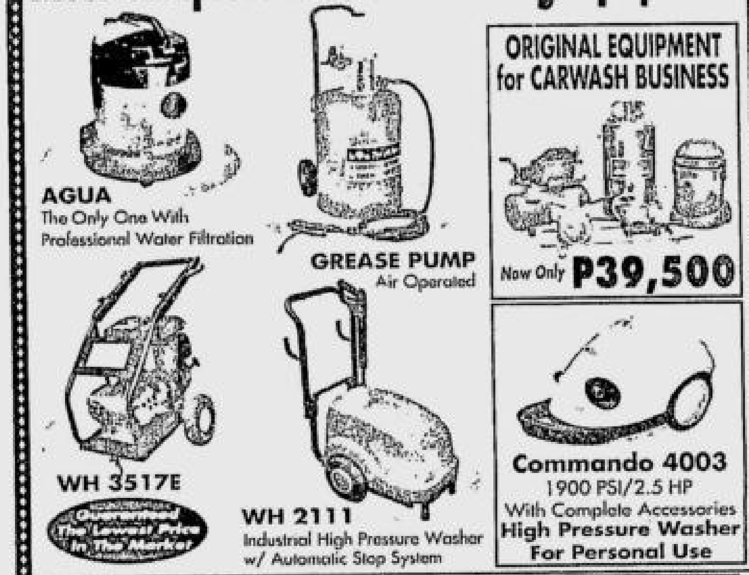
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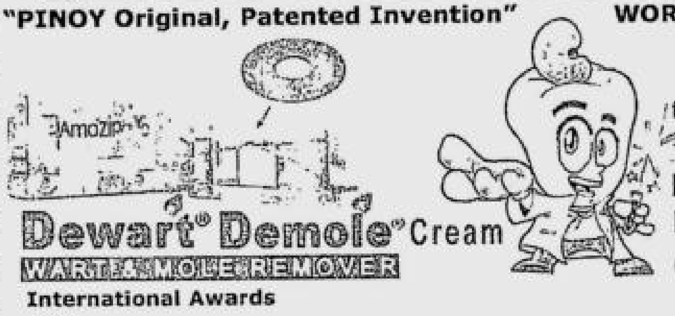

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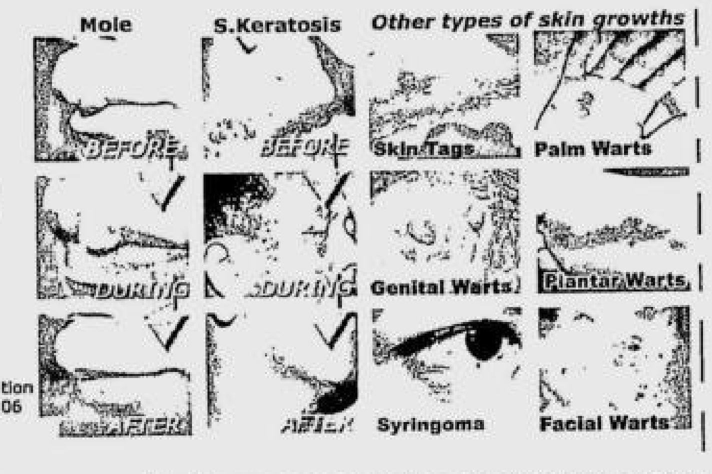
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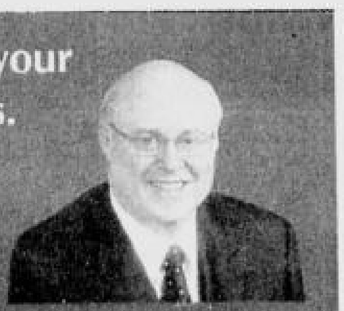

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Accidental overdose ...

From page A1

a medical examiner noted the former Playboy playmate refused to go to a hospital three days before her Feb. 8 death. She chose to endure her illness in a hotel suite littered with pill bottles, soda cans, SlimFast, nicotine gum and an open box of Tamiflu tablets.

Broward County Medical Examiner Dr. Joshua Perper found that in the days before her death, the 39-year-old Smith had been taking large amounts of the seldom prescribed sedative chloral hydrate, which also contributed to the 1962 overdose death of Smith's idol, Marilyn Monroe.

Police found no apparent sign of foul play, and the medical examiner ruled Smith's death probably was not a suicide because people who take their own lives typically use much more lethal drugs than chloral hydrate.

Rather, Perper said, Smith might have been simply unaware that the sedative could be fatal in combination with the multiple other prescriptions she was taking in normal doses for anxiety, depression and insomnia.

Contributing factors included her weakened condition from a stomach flu and a 40-degree Celsius fever brought on by a pus-filled infection on her buttocks from repeated injection of other drugs.

Long history of drug abuse

"She may have taken the dosages she was accustomed to but succumbed because she was already weakened," Perper said in his report. "Miss Smith has a long history of prescription drug abuse and self-medicated in the past."

The recommended dose of chloral hydrate is one to two teaspoons before bed. Smith often took two tablespoons, and she sometimes drank directly from the bottle, the report said.

A statement issued by lawyers for Howard K. Stern, Smith's companion who was with her before her death, said that Stern and Smith's physician urged her to get emergency treatment but she refused because "she did not want the media frenzy that follows her."

"She refused to go to the hospital because she wanted to avoid media," attorney Lilly Ann Sanchez said in a news release. "Anna called the shots in Anna's life and everyone close to her knows that."

Unanswered questions

The autopsy report left some unanswered questions, such as why it took so long for emergency personnel to be summoned when Smith was discovered unresponsive Feb. 8 in her room at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino.

The report found that a private nurse had asked a bodyguard to call 911 around 1 p.m. and had started CPR. The Seminole EMS was called about 1:40 p.m. by a bodyguard and arrived six minutes later. The ambulance reached the hospital at 2:43 p.m., and Smith was pronounced dead shortly thereafter.

Perper said Smith could have been saved had she been hospitalized earlier in the week simply because, her drug intake could have been controlled.

"If she would have gone to the hospital she wouldn't have died because she wouldn't have had the opportunity to take the excessive amount of chloral hydrate," he told The Associated Press.

But Perper said the lag in calling 911 on the day of Smith's death probably did not matter.

"The earlier you come to a hospital the more you have a chance, but there's not a guarantee," he said.

"Those are not things with a mathematic precision, but within a reasonable degree of medical certainty, I don't think she had really a realistic chance."

3 doctors prescribed drugs

Perper said he believed at least three doctors had prescribed Smith drugs using a number of aliases, but all the medication was meant for her.

Stern lawyer Sanchez said the chloral hydrate was prescribed for Smith by her friend and psychiatrist, Dr. Khristine Eroshevich, who also traveled with her to Florida. Sanchez said the drug was prescribed last year after Smith's 20-year-old son, Daniel, died in the Bahamas of apparent drug-related causes.

"She was having nightmares. She was having hallucinations. She was unable to sleep," Sanchez said, adding that Eroshevich turned to "an older, tried and true drug" because it was more effective for Smith than newer sleeping medicines.

Perper said Smith also had been on several antidepressant and antianxiety drugs and had recently been injecting herself with purported longevity medications, Vitamin B-12 and growth hormone.

She felt ill shortly after arriving in Fort Lauderdale from the Bahamas on Feb. 5 on a trip with Stern to buy a new yacht. But that illness was brought under control by antibiotics and an ice bath. She also suffered intense, pungent sweating that soaked the sheets. An assistant medical examiner's report described seeing a table in Smith's hotel room containing cold medicine, soda cans, SlimFast, nicotine gum and an open box of Tamiflu tablets.

Death reflected way she lived

Seminole Tribal Police Chief Charlie Tiger said investigators found nothing unusual on laptop computers belonging to Smith and Stern.

Tiger also said nothing came up during an exhaustive review of tapes from hotel security cameras and from interviews with numerous witnesses.

The public airing of the details of Smith's death reflected the way she lived her life.

A high school dropout in Texas, Smith gained fame as Playboy Playmate of the Year, a model for Guess jeans and later a star in her own reality show. She married 89-year-old oilman J. Howard Marshall II, and after his death took her fight for Marshall's estimated $500 million fortune as far as the Supreme Court.

That ongoing battle could make her infant daughter, Dannielynn, very wealthy. Stern and two other men have claimed to be the baby's father.

The medical examiner's report was accompanied by a press release and even a PowerPoint presentation. Among the details were descriptions of Smith's breast-enhancement scars, her pink hair extensions and numerous tattoos, including one of a Playboy bunny, a Bible intertwined with a heart and shooting flames, and the smiling face of Marilyn Monroe. *AP*

Bahamas starts inquest into death of Anna Nicole Smith's son

NASSAU, BAHAMAS—A LETHAL COMBINATION of drugs killed both Anna Nicole Smith and her 20-year-old son. But while authorities in Florida found no criminal wrongdoing in the Playboy Playmate's death, no such determination has yet been made in the young man's case.

The death of Daniel Smith, who overdosed in September while visiting his mother shortly after she gave birth, will be examined by a seven-member jury in a formal inquest scheduled to start Tuesday in the Bahamas, where the former reality TV star had taken up residence.

Chief Magistrate Roger Gomez, who is presiding over the inquest, said he expects the publicity over Anna Nicole's Feb. 8 death and the legal battle over custody of her infant daughter will make picking the jury difficult, since most Bahamians have followed media reports about the tragedies.

"That is a major cause of concern because you would have to have been living in a cave not to have heard about this case," he said. "We are going to have to give the jury a strong warning to put aside anything that they may have heard and just concentrate on the evidence."

In September, Dr. Cyril Wecht, a forensic pathologist hired by Smith's family to perform an autopsy on the young man, concluded he died from methadone and two antidepressant drugs interacting in his system.

But the case remains open as far as Bahamian authorities are concerned.

Jurors are expected to hear from dozens of witnesses—including Wecht and Anna Nicole's lawyer-turned-companion Howard K. Stern—as they consider whether Daniel's death should be ruled an accident, suicide or perhaps even homicide.

Wecht said both deaths highlight the dangers of "people taking multiple drugs about which they know little or nothing about." *AP*

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Food for thought:
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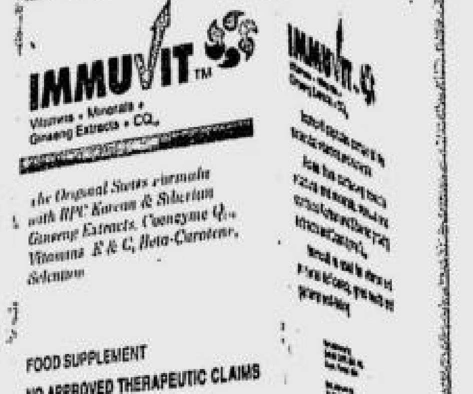
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Spotlight

EDITORIAL

TO BE SURE, THE PERMANENT PEOPLE'S TRIbunal that held sessions in the Hague can indict and it can hand down verdicts, but in the end, it's a non-official body that reflects the opinions of those involved in its deliberations. The ambassador of the Netherlands, Robert Vornis, went as far as to call it a "kangaroo court," as well he might.

Since the tribunal said that the Philippine and American governments "colluded with each other in implementing the US' so-called 'war on terror' in Southeast Asia," the government the Dutch ambassador represents could also be found guilty of collusion with the United States. Dutch troops were in Iraq until 20[illegible] they continue to serve in Afghanistan as part of Na[illegible] forces fighting the Taliban (Royal Dutch Shell, lest anyone forget, presents an attractive target to terrorism in the Middle East and Asia). So, of course, the Dutch diplomats will make a withering statement—and, of course, Filipino officials would immediately begin parroting the same line.

The point is that the PPT represents a particular political community, and speaks for that community and its values: those of the Left. What our government wants to overlook is that this is a community with a global presence whose sympathies lie with their local counterparts who are at the receiving end of official hostility here at home. This is nothing new, as the PPT's origins show. They lie in similar efforts first undertaken by a British philosopher, Nobel Laureate and pacifist who was famous in his day, Bertrand Russell. He formed the Russell Tribunal (which included prominent fellow leftists such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Bevoir and Amado Hernandez) in 1966 to investigate the United States for war crimes in Vietnam. The PPT, established in 1979, was consciously modeled on the Russell Tribunal.

In the same manner that the governments of the United States, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea paid no heed to the Russell Tribunal for being biased, our government has no choice but to say the same thing of its successor. But press releases can't overshadow the fact that just as the Russell Tribunal helped galvanize the Left against the Vietnam War, the PPT plays a similar role today, whether on the war in Iraq or the war on terror. It may have no power and no real authority, but the PPT is very successful at achieving its purpose, which its critics dismiss as propaganda. That is, to raise public consciousness, to attract international attention, to give voices to the otherwise voiceless.

And so, Filipino officials end up circling their wagons. "Let the Philippine government solve its problem instead of going to the international arena and having foreign governments coming in and interfering, which is wrong," said Ed Diansuy, the spokesperson of the Commission on Human Rights. Perhaps he should have listened to the Dutch ambassador first before saying anything. Or he could have read any story on the tribunal in the local and international media and realized immediately it was a non-government and non-official undertaking.

Diansuy went on to say that the CHR is "monitoring whether the government has been acting fast enough," and then in the same breath said the CHR's official position was, "Let's give them time." Again? They are taking their time to see whether the government is acting fast enough? The CHR needs a new spokesperson.

The reason a publicity stunt like the PPT's succeeds in generating media attention is that official Philippine reactions to allegations of human rights violations are only as good as the amount of foreign column inches devoted to human rights. When Filipinos, and only Filipinos, expressed concern over human rights violations, President Macapagal-Arroyo and officials down the line all shrugged it off. They thumbed their noses at any and all allegations. A real ruckus had been going on locally for months, and what did she do? Ask Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan to take a bow during her last State of the Nation Address.

It took foreign attention and expressions of alarm to cause the creation of the Melo Commission, and Task Force Usig. It took an international outcry to force the administration to release the Melo Commission's report. It has taken foreign attention to make her say, as she now says, that she will not tolerate human rights violations. It took leftists in Europe to pressure their government to pressure our government, in turn, on human rights, just as it took the same effort to make the US government raise human rights as an issue, too. Because, if all politics is local, the local politics of those countries insists on a presumption local leftists are being denied: they are part of the body politic, too.

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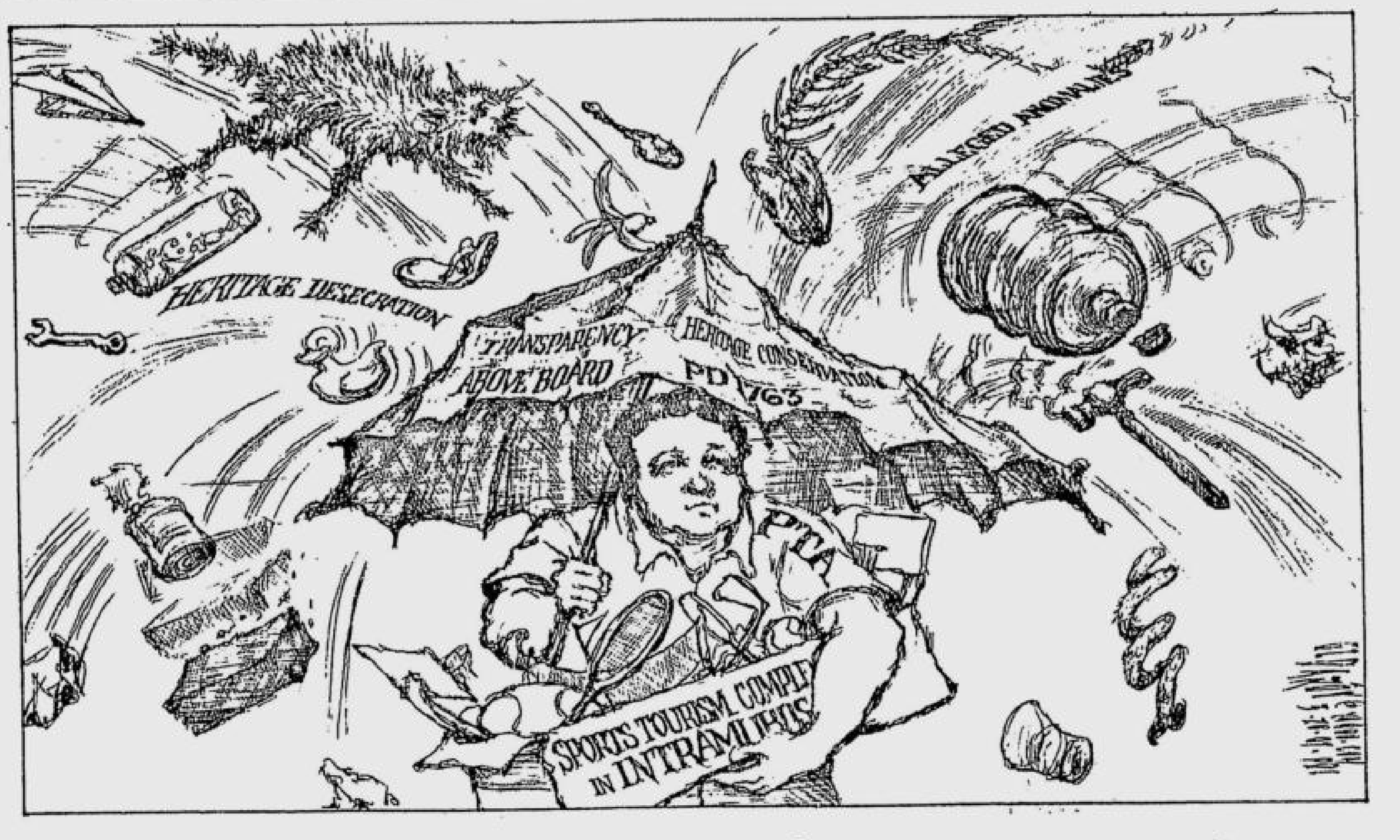


What happened to P1B for war veterans?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE P1 BILLION THAT PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo ordered released for the feeding program for schoolchildren reminds me of another P1 billion that she ordered released to the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) a year ago. The money was supposed to be for the payment of benefits for war veterans. The occasion was the celebration of Bataan Day, April 9, and the order to release the fund was announced obviously to gain points with the veterans.

We will be commemorating Bataan Day again in two weeks' time, but almost one year after the President made a big show of giving the benefits due to the veterans, not a single centavo has been paid to them. What happened to the P1 billion? Did it end up like the P728-million fertilizer fund that was channeled to the pockets of congressmen friendly to the GMA administration to be used in the 2004 elections? The PVAO has been very quiet all this time. Why? Did it get the P1 billion? If it did not, it would be easy to say that it was all a press release, there was really no release of the fund. So why is it not explaining to the veterans? Why is it oh so silent?

Or did it get the money but somehow the money got diverted elsewhere? That would explain the PVAO's curious silence. The PVAO should speak up. If it continues to keep silent, it would reinforce the suspicion that it malversed the amount.

If the budget department really released the money a year ago, Malacañang should order the PVAO to say where it went since it did not go to the veterans as originally intended. If it forgot to release the fund, it should say so and get the PVAO off the hook. The veterans are ready to wage another war if they don't get their benefits by next Bataan Day. And the angry ex-soldiers will surely ask the President about it when she addresses them again on April 9.

Also, the Commission on Audit audits the PVAO. Surely, it would know where the money went. So where did it go? The COA should speak up and enlighten not only the veterans but also the taxpaying public. Continued silence can only mean that it is trying to hide something.

* * *

Everybody is talking about the televised apology of the "Dancing Queen," former Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta. You must have already seen this TV commercial. Everybody is asking why she did it.

The reactions are evenly divided. One side says she was sincerely apologetic and wanted to make a clean breast of it and have peace of mind. The other side says it was a desperation move intended to gain sympathy and boost her bottom ranking in the surveys for the senatorial candidates. Oreta is at the bottom with Sultan Kiram, Chavit Singson and Prospero Pichay. It would take a miracle or a major tactical shift—or a Garci—for her to get in the winning circle. That apology could be the major tactical gamble, her critics say.

It's probably a wrong gamble, as some observers said, but what the hell, she would lose anyway if she did not do anything dramatic so she might as well make the gamble. In spite of Oreta's claim that her public apology was not political but a sincere act of contrition, I believe that it was an all-or-nothing throw of the dice.

I know many Filipinos are suspicious of apologies after the "I am sorry" speech of President Arroyo, which is certainly not a sincere act of contrition. My personal feeling here is that we should give Oreta the benefit of the doubt. Which is not the same thing as saying we should vote for her.

I would like to believe that she really wants peace of mind, especially since the signs are clear that she would end up in the "*kangkong* patch." If she loses, at least she would lose it with her head high and her heart at peace. It could be the "Dancing Queen's" last hurrah.

* * *

Despite denials by the spokespersons of Team Unity and the Genuine Opposition that a few of their senatorial candidates were thinking of giving up their senatorial bid and run for local positions, I think there is basis for the rumors. If you see by the results of opinion polls that you are going to lose in the senatorial race, you would look for a Plan B, wouldn't you? And that Plan B could be running for local positions. Oreta, Singson, Cesar Montano, Nikki Coseteng and Sonia Roco were rumored to be ready to desert their senatorial tickets and file their certificates of candidacy for various local positions before the deadline for filing.

There are good reasons for such decisions. Singson, for instance, although trailing behind in the senatorial surveys, can easily win a local position in Ilocos Sur. Oreta might have a chance in Tarlac, Coseteng in Quezon City and Roco in Bicol. Naturally, they were discouraged by their political parties. So there is nothing they can do now but work harder, spend more, and try to improve their rankings to have at least a respectable finish.

* * *

I see that senior citizens in Hollywood are still going strong, just like John Wayne and Gary Cooper did before them. Sylvester Stallone is appearing in a new episode of the highly successful Rocky Balboa franchise. I hear that another Rambo movie is in the works for him, too. Bruce Willis is reprising his role as policeman John McClane in three "Die Hard" films in a fourth episode of the franchise. And Harrison Ford will also do a fourth episode of the "Indiana Jones" series. All three are in their 60s and 70s with brittle bones, dangerous for stunts in action movies. Hollywood is intent on squeezing the last dollar from proven box-office draws.

They might as well do one more "Dirty Harry" movie with Clint Eastwood, perhaps the most senior and most awarded of Hollywood's elder box-office stars.

Presumption

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

NORMALLY I DO NOT CARE TO EXPLAIN people's values by the schools they go to. Or more specifically, I do not care to blame people's lack of values by the schools they go to. I figure that, paraphrasing Cassius who said, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in the stars but in ourselves that we are underlings," we can always say, "The fault, dear brutes, is not in our schools but in ourselves that we are overbearing."

But I'm tempted to reexamine this in light of what Assumption College principal Sr. Maria Josefina Matias says about her school's most famous, or infamous, alumna, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. "As an alumna, she is recognized and has imbibed some of the values. She is not perfect. But I'd like to think that she embodies the struggles faced by the Assumption girl or daughter of Marie-Eugenie (Milleret)."

Marie-Eugenie is the French nun who founded the Religious of Assumption. She will be canonized on June 3 at St. Peter's Square. Ma. Lourdes Herrera, president of the Assumption Alumnae Association, says the association has invited GMA to join the celebration in Rome.

Now here's the breathtaking kicker. Marie-Eugenie's passions in life, which values Matias says GMA has imbibed and which principles Herrera means for GMA to reaffirm in Rome, are: Truth, Social Justice and Peace.

I do not know if Matias and Herrera speak for the entire school when they say these things. I do know my friends from Assumption will be fit to be tied at the suggestion they share the same values with the alumna they like to, well, let's just say talk about with much shaking of the head. I do recall something my friend Minguita Padilla wrote about a couple of years ago, which was her profound disappointment over having voted for GMA in 2004 and her even profounder disappointment that a daughter of her alma mater would turn out that way.

Like I said, I do not blame schools for what their students become. There are other, probably more powerful, forces at work in shaping a person's life and mind. And you can't discount the idea that some folk are just incorrigible. What do we usually say when we do not know something? "I was absent at the time." Well, maybe GMA was absent at the time they were teaching truth, social justice and peace.

There's no need to dwell again on how GMA stands in relation to the Truth. That is for God and Garci to know, or tell. But the good officials of one of the most prestigious schools in this country may wish to explain to an unenlightened public how social justice is the guiding light of a rule that has turned this country into the most corrupt in all of Asia. I do know that social justice means giving to the poor. Maybe GMA and her husband see themselves among the poorest of the poor? Well, it is true in other than the physical sense.

Just as well the good officials of one of the most prestigious schools in this country may wish to explain to an unenlightened public how peace can be the spiritual force animating a rule that has produced the rampant killings of journalists and political activists. Well, if they cannot, I can. I have a new theory about the killings, one that seems to have escaped the powers of detection of the finest sleuths of this country. Since the Commission on Human Rights has exculpated GMA and Jovito Palparan for the killings, and since there is little reason to believe the revolution loves to devour its children in this mind-bogglingly cannibalistic scale, we can arrive at only one conclusion: Nobody really murdered the victims. They all committed suicide.

I can imagine how I'd feel if some officials of the Ateneo said that their (currently) most famous, or infamous, son, Mike Arroyo, has imbibed the school's values and that he may not be perfect but he embodies the struggles faced by the typical son of Christ's favorite soldier. My feathers may be of a paler blue than those of other Blue Eagles, having dropped out of the Ateneo in my last semester to plunge into the maelstrom of activist life, but I hold that school in much fondness, especially now that my son studies there. Just some weeks ago, I was talking to Martin Bautista, the Kapatiran candidate, and he was telling me how much he had been guided in life by the Ateneo's motto, "A man for others." He is living proof of it: Despite a lucrative medical practice in the United States, he never applied for a green card in all his 17 years there. Instead, he kept coming back to the Philippines to be with the poorest of the poor in Negros.

To have Mike Arroyo depicted as "a man for others," that is to do violence to every word in that phrase, including "a" and "for." The last thing a man for others will do is shove his own brother in harm's way at the first threat to his health, which was what he did to Iggy when Ping Lacson accused him of being Jose Pidal. Not I, said he in alarm, and pointed to his younger sibling, the one person Filipinos, never mind if they are men for others or not, instinctively try to protect. Man for others? Others for The Man!

Our profoundest problem today is not political or economic, it is moral. It is our complete lack of a sense of right and wrong and our growing aversion to honesty and decency that are killing us more than anything else. One would think that in this context, schools, being the beacon of knowledge and wisdom, prestigious or not, would trot out the best examples to inspire us, not the worst to depress us. Who the hell cares about perfection? I do not particularly mind that the people schools give us to emulate are not perfect, but I greatly mind that the ones they do are resolutely dedicated to imperfection. Invite GMA to Rome to reaffirm the virtues of truth, social justice and peace?

That is not Assumption, that is Presumption.

GMA's new nemesis

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK HAS emerged as the latest international nemesis of the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo with the release yesterday of its 2007 Asian Development Outlook, which deflated government claims of economic gains.

The report highlighted the laggard growth rate of the Philippine economy compared with most Asian economies, and it noted that it was not strong enough to lift employment sufficiently. It came as the administration continued to reel from the battering it received from a US Senate inquiry into its human rights record and pressure from the European Union and the United Nations to stop the extrajudicial executions in the country.

In an effort to parry these devastating blows, the Arroyo administration has tried to refocus the debate to the economy, where it believes it has a strong case to make. The ADB annual outlook report shifted the focus back to the economy and the picture it drew was not much to the liking of the administration. It only gave cold comfort to, and offered little relief for, the embattled Arroyo regime. In the frontierless system of economic globalization, the Philippine government cannot escape interventions in its internal affairs and being taken to task for its deficits in democratic governance and economic progress.

The ADB report predicts that developing Asian economies will expand at 7.6 percent in 2007 and 7.7 percent in 2008. The region achieved an economic expansion of 8.3 percent in 2006, its fastest rate in more than a decade.

The Philippines, however, showed picayune results. Projected growth in Southeast Asia is 5.6 percent in 2007, edging up to 5.9 percent in 2008. The Philippine economy is expected to expand by 5.4 percent this year and 5.7 in 2008. The report said the economic expansion in the next two years would continue to be driven by the steady flow of cash remittances from Filipino overseas workers, which last year hit a record of $12.8 billion and helped push overall growth to 5.4 percent.

"Growth and employment have lagged behind the government's medium-term targets of 6.8 percent to 7.8 percent," the report noted. The ADB gross domestic product growth forecast for the Philippines this year is below the government's target of 6.1 percent to 6.7 percent, which is anchored on the remittances hitting a new record of $14.7 billion this year.

In the section on the Philippines, the report said:

"Achievement in 2006 included moderate economic growth, a downtrend in inflation, and stronger fiscal and external positions. This year, still high levels of remittances and low real interest rates, as well as greater fiscal expenditures, should keep expansion at around the same level.

"However, it has not been strong enough to lift employment sufficiently, mainly because of declining investment-to-GDP ratio. Improvements in the investment climate are needed to spur economic expansion, increase generation and provide public resources for social programs."

On economic performance, the report said the GDP rose by 5.4 percent in 2006, maintaining the slight upward trend of the past five years. "With a strong rise in remittances from overseas workers to $12.8 billlion ... gross national product growth accelerated to 6.2 percent from 5.6 percent in 2005. Personal consumption expenditures and net exports were the main contributors in 2006. The substantial remittances and low interest rates supported private consumption. However, gross fixed capital formation continued to decline as a share of GDP to the lowest level in 20 years, reflecting a deficient investment environment and restraints on the public capital spending required to buttress the government's fiscal position."

The report pointed out the implication of the growth rate for job creation, a sensitive political issue in the current election campaign, where the government's record in reducing poverty has come under fire. This is where the equity issue arises.

However, the report said: "Growth has not been strong enough to raise the employment level to significantly dent the unemployment rate. In the three years 2004 to 2006, employment edged up by 2.5 percent on average each year, or about half the level envisaged in the Medium-Term Development Plan 2004-2010. Services, primarily wholesale and retail trade, accounted for two-thirds of the employment gain, and agriculture a quarter.

"Unemployment remained close to 8 percent in 2006, slightly more than half of the unemployed were high school graduates (32.3 percent) and college graduates (18.4 percent), indicating that, in addition to raising the overall level of employment, there may be a mismatch in skills... In a worrisome trend, the number of underemployed rose to 23 percent of total employment in 2006 from 18 percent in 2004."

The report said: "Southeast Asia will show little change in 2007 relative to 2006. Growth is put at 5.6 percent, edging up to 5.9 percent in 2008. But Indonesia, Southeast Asia's largest economy, is seen accelerating as lower interest rates and weaker inflation give a boost to domestic spending... The Philippines is expected to maintain steady growth of around 5.4 percent. The investment rate may stabilize and then pick up, and although expansion of infrastructure spending would be helpful, the benefits would unlikely be felt before 2008."

Cambodia saw double-digit rates of expansion for the third year, the report said. Robust growth has become almost routine in Vietnam, and 2006 was no different, with both exports and domestic demand making strong contributions. Growth in the Lao People's Democratic Republic accelerated, as large hydropower and mining projects progressed.

Drugs and dancing

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

LAST WEEK, THE US COURT OF APPEALS FOR the Federal Circuit invalidated the patent of Pfizer, a major drug multinational, over amlodipine besylate, a hypertension drug under the brand name "Norvasc."

A three-judge panel unanimously invalidated the patent of amlodipine besylate, referred to as the "303 patent," issued in 1989, because Pfizer already had a previous patent, the "909 patent," issued in 1982 already disclosing amlodipine, but combined with a different salt, maleate. Since patents lapse after 25 years, the ruling effectively places amlodipine besylate in the public domain, meaning, any company can manufacture it under its generic name.

Pfizer had sought to extend the life of the patent by using a new combination, but the court found that "the superior property of amlopidine mixed with the salt besylate, compared to the previous amlodipine maleate, was not unexpected, thus, rendering the invention as 'obvious.'"

This development was welcomed by Sen. Mar Roxas, who said the US court's decision is consistent with his proposed amendments to the Intellectual Property Code, or SB 2263, also known as the "Cheaper Medicines Bill."

"The US Federal Circuit's decision to invalidate the patent of Norvasc for 'obviousness' also upholds one key principle in our bill, which is on the 'inventiveness' or 'newness' of medicine patents," he said.

Existing loopholes in the Intellectual Property Code had allowed multinational firms to have an extended hold over the patents of medicines—the so-called "ever-greening of patents"—denying generics manufacturers the opportunity to develop cheaper versions, said the senator.

* * *

ROXAS explained that for a product to deserve a new patent, it must involve an "inventive step," which means that the invention is "not obvious" or not known to any person skilled in an art—in the case of medicines, a chemist—during the date of application for the patent.

"This means that if the so-called invention just results from the mere discovery of a new use, form or property of a known substance—but its efficacy is still the same—there is no "inventive step," he said.

Among the "Roxas Amendments" in SB 2263 is a new provision specifying that "there is no inventive step if the invention results from the mere discovery of a new form or new property of a known substance which does not result in the enhancement of the known efficacy of that substance, or, the mere discovery of any new use for a known substance or a known process unless such known process results in a new product that employs at least one new reactant."

The amendments are compliant with the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) of the World Trade Organization.

The Senate has passed the bill on third reading. The House is expected to pass its counterpart, House Bill 6035, when session resumes on June 4.

This piece of legislation has been the subject of much controversy, including one episode where Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin ordered drug industry lobbyists out of the session hall for allegedly exerting undue pressure on him and other legislators to delay passage of the "Cheap Medicines Bill."

Studies have shown that drug prices in the Philippines—even for drugs manufactured by the same drug multinationals under the same brand names—are as much as 10 times more expensive than in other countries, primarily India and Thailand.

* * *

WOMEN'S Month this year has been colorful and in many instances politically charged. This year's celebration is not yet over, but the diverse ways by which various groups showed their support for women only proves the feminist adage that all issues are women's issues.

The month has seen protests, commemorations and assessments of how far we have gone or how much yet needs to be done. Corporate giants launched different products (like a women's credit card, or a mom-friendly luxury SUV), with Avon's "Hello Tomorrow Women's Fund" giving women NGOs and advocates a reason to celebrate.

The Quezon City government, with its Gender and Development Resource Coordination Office, emphasized film as a powerful medium for change by supporting the UP Film Institute's 13th Feminist Film Festival, as well as by subsidizing the whole-day screening of most-gender-sensitive film awardees at the SM North Edsa Cinemas this Friday.

At the Fort, Sen. Pia Cayetano gathered 1,000 women (and some men) to race 5 and 10 kilometers for the prevention of breast and cervical cancer, and to raise awareness against incest and domestic violence.

To cap the month, two women's NGOs, Kababaihan Laban sa Karahasan (Kalakasan) and Can't Live in the Closet (CLIC), are joining hands to mark the third anniversary of the enactment of the Anti-Violence against Women Law, and to seek support for counseling services for abused women and girls.

* * *

THIS Saturday night, women of all professions, abilities and beauties are invited to come to the "All-Women's Dance 'I'm Every Woman'" from 9 p.m. to the wee hours, at the 7th Note Bar on Malugay Street, Makati.

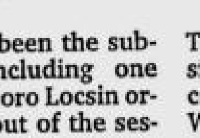
A ticket to the dance comes with a chance to win door prizes and gifts (courtesy of the VMV Group, Unilever, DKT Philippines and David's Salon). There will also be live music by "Latin Queen" Nikkie Mossman and her band, and the "diva of cool," Pat Castillo, as guest.

Tickets are available at the Pride Exchange on Quezon Avenue and Malate, and Santuario Spa on Orosa Street, Malate. A minimum of five tickets may be delivered in Metro Manila before March 29 upon request through Tonet at 0906-515-9001 or Mari at 0918-936-6898. You may also call 735-9687 for ticket orders.

Show your support for women and girls! Let's go dancing!

Jurassic moments

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

KATE TURABIAN IS A NAME MEMORABLE TO people who struggled to compose their first college research paper. Aside from the essentials of academic citation that came complete with Latin abbreviations, which sounded like incantations for *anting-anting,* I distinctly remember having to take notes on those sturdy 3 x 5-inch cards, and drawing a box with a heavy marking pen on bond paper that was used behind a clean sheet on a typewriter to set the one inch margins all round each page of the term paper. Those were truly Stone-Age times, when typewriters were manual and footnotes had to be carefully set on the bottom of a page. All mistakes were covered by liquid paper correction fluid and typed over; anything beyond remedy entailed typing the entire page all over again.

Typing out a term paper was an ordeal that assured brisk business for typists, and there were many of them along Recto Avenue in downtown Manila who could produce anything, from a term paper to a dissertation on any subject listed on their catalogue. The only hurdle was the price.

Today, notes are automatically set either as endnotes or footnotes by our computers, and to simplify matters further, the complicated Turabian form has been replaced by a new format that is easier on the eyes and easier to type. In retrospect, I wish I had all these conveniences when I was a college freshman, but the consolation of surviving all that is that I have actually seen and felt progress within my lifetime.

This semester, I retired my 25-year-old slides and shifted clumsily into PowerPoint and the 21st century, thanks to my teaching assistants who constantly remind me that dinosaurs became extinct because they did not adapt. In its time, the slide projector was considered "cutting edge." Using two projectors and two screens to illustrate comparison and contrast was even more impressive. But in recent years, I would prepare the slide projector before class and someone would ask, "What on earth is that?"

The now legendary "Great Ambeth Ocampo Slideshow" is now different and former students humor me by claiming it formed part of the learning experience to sit in a dark classroom and hear the constant sound of the internal projector fan, punctuated by the unique clicking sound as the carousel rotated on the projector. There was a time when the overhead projector and acetate were also considered "cutting edge," but now my students comment on the otherworldly yellow glow they produce on a screen. Soon these gadgets will end up in a museum as antiques, together with the teachers who use them.

My students laugh hysterically when I tell them what it was like to join a newspaper at the tail-end of the Marcos years. It challenges their imagination to hear about a lost time and they are more amazed that we typed our articles out, manually of course, on rolls of continuous newsprint, actually the blank side of news from the wire services.

Everyone, then and now, is familiar with "writing in white heat and editing in cold blood." The process remains the same, but the technology is different. Two decades ago, making corrections or editing articles required either typing out the entire article or using scissors and a stapler to literally cut up the draft article, rearrange it and staple it into place.

This is the ancient origin of the "cut-and-paste" feature in our computer programs. As a matter of fact, on the second page of the manuscript of "El Filibusterismo," we see how Rizal covered up a paragraph in Spanish with another in German simply by pasting the revised text on the old. Now that is literally cut and paste.

I fondly remember the noise typewriters made in a newsroom and the physical exertion that came not just with pounding the keys but moving the page on a roller and throwing the whole thing back with your right arm to start a new line. In one newsroom in the late 1980s, the generation gap was very clear as everyone who used manual typewriters sat on one side of the newsroom opposite those who used computers. For many journalists, including myself, the shift from manual typewriter to the computer was a paradigm shift: work required physical effort and noise, and the computer changed all this.

I remember the first cell phones that came with an antenna and resembled, in both form and size, the shoe-phone in the TV series "Get Smart." Cell phones today are not only small, they do other things like play music and movies, do integral calculus, remind us of appointments and bank balances, etc.

Our lives have been changed very much by technology, but in a profession like history, the basic tools remain the same: One still has to go to a library or archive and dig up or research material. One still has to sit and reflect and think. No computer can do that.

The Internet allows me to search the catalogues of libraries half a world away, or download historical materials from any institution that has digitized parts of its collection and made these available online. This may explain why many students find it old-fashioned to go to the library and literally use a book.

This weekend, my students will graduate from college and move into the real world. I can only wonder what Jurassic moments they will narrate two decades from now.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Summers of our lives

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

"STRAWBERRY. . . IT ALL STARTED OUT THAT SUMMER IN Cebu when Mr. Cuna (a family friend) realized I had never taken a soda, so he ordered a strawberry soda for me. It tasted like heaven and that was it, strawberry has always been special for me," my sister said.

She and I were having dessert and I was getting my high on vanilla ice cream, which I, too, traced back to one summer, when I had to have my tonsils removed. Before the operation, I was forbidden from taking any ice cream, on the notion (unscientific it turns out) that it would aggravate my frequent bouts with tonsillitis. So, after the tonsillectomy, I got as a kind of ultimate reward the forbidden food of the gods: ice cream, vanilla ice cream, and really, I believe somewhere in our brains there's a place for imprinting food memories—vanilla for me, strawberry for my sister.

Blooms

Maybe in our brains, Filipino brains, we have a special storage area for summer memories. Think back now and I'm sure you can come up with a long list of events, places, faces, scents, tastes that you associate with some summer.

In temperate countries, the four seasons become evocative metaphors for life: spring with the wonders of new life, summer with the zest of youth, autumn with mellowing midlife and winter with the solitude and peace of old age.

What happens then in the Philippines, where we are told we only have the wet and dry seasons or, as Westerners mutter, tongue-in-cheek, no, the two seasons are hot and very hot?

Actually, we have more than two seasons. With age, you learn to tell the seasons as you feel subtle but discernable changes in the colors of leaves, in the way they fall (yes, like autumn!), in the way the breeze stands still, or wafts in, or turns into *habagat*, the monsoon. Even the rains vary in intensity, even in their smell, with the different seasons.

But yes, there is this distinct hot season we label *tag-init.* It's not just a time of heat but of flowers and fiestas and, every few years, elections. Lush bougainvillea colors ambush us now at every corner, providing relief from our cities' bleak and gray landscape. Over at UP Diliman, the gardeners have planted sunflowers and we expect them right in time for graduation in April. In the meantime, there's enough of a spectacle with many of the trees on campus coming into bloom. The best, of course, is yet to come, perhaps in May, when the campus turns crimson with the fire trees.

Check your gardens and you'll find wild lilies that have been lying dormant much of the year to store energy in underground bulbs until the summer heat convinces them to shoot out and unfurl their flowers.

And let's not forget the orchids. My favorite is the *sanggumay*, with the way its vines just hang there through most of the year—*simple lang* as we say in Filipino—patiently waiting till summer comes along and then suddenly it's like someone painted your garden while you were asleep.

Firsts

But the flowers of May (and April and March) only provide a backdrop to a highlight of summer: graduation exercises or, for preschool, moving up ceremonies. The preferred term is, of course, commencement exercises, with every other graduation speaker reminding the students this is not a time when we end school but commence, begin, life.

And our summers? Perhaps they don't really end or begin anything. Summers connect, provide continuity for life. It's a break before new graduates go to work. It's a break, too, for those in schools, with summer workshops and camps offering an amazing variety of activities: dancing, painting, writing, swimming, drama—why, one Buddhist temple in San Juan even offers meditation for children.

Summer's an opportunity for travel, one of the most educational experiences one can have, whether learning about nature . . . or strawberry sodas.

Summer's a time for firsts. Maybe because more people are around at home, we think we've caught the baby's first words, first steps.

Summer's a time of adventure, of new experiences, of daring. Summer's when boys become men, and I mean circumcision although in times past, there may have been other more risqué rites of passage.

Summer's a time for first love (OK and second and third) or of reviving first love. Oh, but don't we ever learn? For some, summer, too, can be a time for heartbreak, an end to innocence, but never mind, all that, too, is part of life.

Intersecting

In mid-life, summers become all the more important for reunions, for lives to intersect. My sister was here visiting from Canada. It was a time for her to look up relatives and friends and classmates, although I did notice that she didn't have that many people her own age to meet up with because so many people of our generation have joined the Filipino diaspora.

"This is my sister," I told other parents at Yna's moving-up ceremony, "and she just flew in from Canada," making it sound like she did just for Yna. But she was here for more. Although my sister's younger, she's now coping with an empty nest, her two children now living away from home because of school. So here she was to look into my own rather late parenting. We'd talk while I changed diapers, prepared milk, put away the toys, and she'd intervene from time to time, remembering how she handled her own children, including quick lessons on using sign language with children (the people who developed this program really should get a Nobel Peace Prize, considering how it has bridged the communication gap we have with babies).

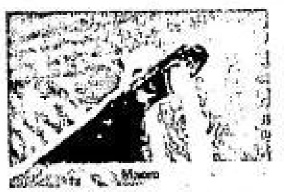
This morning she came into my room to say goodbye. The baby was feeding but raised one hand to sign "bye bye." When she came in to kiss him, he feigned resistance, clearly wanting to use it as an excuse to cuddle up more closely to me.

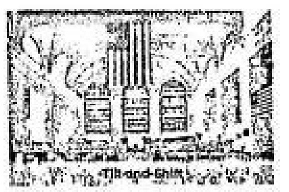
Our family is not good with goodbyes, so we don't usually tag along to the airport. I waved back at her, pretending to sign like the baby: "Go, go . . . see you next summer."

After she left, I suddenly remembered a poem she wrote years ago, about her son who never seemed content with all the hugging and snuggling from his mother. I, too, have to plead at times with my son when he wants to be carried: "You're a big boy now." But I anticipate, as my sister described in her poem, that someday, I'll want to hug him and he'll pull away, maybe even mildly protesting, "I'm a big boy now."

I'd like to think that when the time comes, I'll find comfort remembering our summers together, of his furious signing for more ice cream, of lullabies and lizards on the ceiling, of dogs romping in the garden, of the cat coming in at midnight. Actually, we don't really remember things that happen when we're very young, but we like to think we do because the best summer stories are those from our parents about what we did as babies and toddlers.

That's how we all piece together our childhood—and more. In the end, it isn't so much whose summer it was, or the accuracy of the details, than the way we recall those many summers together, the summers of our lives.





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Long, fearsome night

LIKE ANY TYPICAL FILIPINO KID, I was taught to fear the darkness of the night. *Tikbalang*, *aswang*, and *kapre* were creatures that ate young kids strolling in dark alleys way past bedtime.

As I grew older (and stayed up late longer), I learned that drug addicts, snatchers and hold-uppers were to be feared more than the *aswang* in the dead of night. Boy, I must have grown so fast—now I fear for the country more than I fear for myself in the dead of night. Let me explain by citing some of the incidents that led me to such fear:

- At 3 a.m. of March 19, 2007, detained Bayan Muna Party-List Rep. Satur Ocampo was taken out of prison for a plane ride to Leyte. Anyway, the flight was aborted halfway.
- Past 11 p.m. of Dec. 29, 2006, convicted rapist Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith of the US Marines was surreptitiously transported from the Makati City Jail to the US Embassy.
- Twice, the House of Representatives stayed up late till the early morning hours the next day to quash two impeachment bids against Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo; and once, to railroad Charter change.

Hell must be jubilant over Ms Arroyo's leadership. After all, under her guidance, the government operates "like a thief in the night." Unfortunately, every time the thief strikes, democracy suffers; and we are robbed of our rights and liberties.

With barely two months left before this year's elections, I can't help but worry that there is going on a sort of dress rehearsal for late-night operations come May. Oh yes, of course, three Sundays ago, a building of the Commission on Elections went up in smoke in the dead of night. I just hope this incident wouldn't count.

But definitely, there are enough reasons for us to wake up from our deep slumber and keep the lights on through this long night.

—MARCO M. DELOS REYES,
national president,
National Union of Students of the Philippines,
nusp_national@yahoo.com

Gonzalez's proud legacy noted

MY SIBLINGS AND I ARE DISgusted with the editorial which stated that our father, Justice Secretary Raul M. Gonzalez, leaves "a sorry legacy for his children." ("Bad karma," INQUIRER, 3/16/07)

We are honored to be his children, for he is a brave, patriotic and pro-poor official who was elected to Congress thrice by the intelligent people of Iloilo City and became justice secretary, despite years of ranting and railing against him by the INQUIRER, which often acts like a scandal sheet or tabloid.

—DENNIS T. GONZALEZ, Ph.D.,
5 Finland St.,
Loyola Grand Villas, QC

Dennis Gonzalez should check his facts. The INQUIRER hardly took notice of his father until he "noted" the national canvassing of presidential votes in the 2004 election and, from then on, made it a habit to shoot his mouth off..—Ed.

Creature and ideas from the Dark Age

THIS IS A REACTION TO JOSE Caparas' letter. (INQUIRER, 3/23/07) He is the one still in the dark age, not INQUIRER columnist Antonio Montalvan. And the "grandmas" he praises are the ones who produced those enormous families that have turned the Philippines into a terribly corrupt, violent, lawless, superstitious, ignorant, desperately overcrowded country; with a little help from Catholicism, of course.

Does Caparas think that the millions of Filipinos who have emigrated (or are trying to) can find decent work and existence in the Philippines?

The only people who make progress in the Philippines are those who are already rich and want more money, like the members of Congress who just doubled their pork barrel. Their greed for pork is the last straw. The Filipino nation is headed for oblivion.

—ROB HANAN,
robhanan@robhanan.com

Violation of separation principle

"GOV'T TEACHES ISLAM IN state schools." (INQUIRER, 3/22/07) This clearly violates the constitutional principle on the separation of Church and State.

The government has no business in explaining to the general public that Islam is or is not a violent and/or peaceful religion. It is the believers who must do whatever they can to present themselves as peaceful worshippers.

—GEORGE SECHONG,
Trox7525@yahoo.com

Gordon-Paulino row blown out of proportion

ONCE AGAIN, OLONGAPO CITY VICE MAYOR Rolen Paulino, the renegade protégé, is on the loose, spewing fire and brimstone because of burning ambition.

This is evident in his allegation that Mayor James "Bong" Gordon Jr. shoved him away from Genuine Opposition senatorial candidate Francis "Chiz" Escudero during a press conference in a local restaurant. (INQUIRER, 3/05/07)

Well, there's nothing new in his exaggerated version of a minor incident. He claims "it seemed his lungs would collapse by the sheer force" of the alleged *panghahawi*. Since entering politics, Paulino has mastered the art of exploiting a particular issue or personality to turn the odds in his favor. Poor Escudero, his presence in Olongapo was taken advantaged of in a desperate attempt by the vice mayor to elicit sympathy and earn *pogi* points.

Escudero came to Olongapo first and foremost to campaign for his candidacy. To meddle in local politics certainly never crossed his mind because he would have nothing to gain from it. As a visitor to the city and the Escuderos, being long-time family friends of the Gordons, it was but natural for Mayor Gordon to welcome Escudero. Thus, Gordon tagged Escudero along to his regular morning jogging sortie around the city for Escudero to personally meet local residents. After which, Escudero invited the mayor to join him in his press conference scheduled later that day. This explains the presence of Mayor Gordon at Escudero's press conference which, as it turned out, was peopled by the local opposition.

In fairness, Mayor Gordon doesn't need a "piece of Chiz." He doesn't need to ride on the popularity of other politicians to boost his reelection bid in the forthcoming May elections. It's the other way around. Escudero needs Gordon's support to win votes in Olongapo. The mayor did his share because he strongly feels that Chiz deserves to be in the Senate.

Being seen or photographed in the company of national politicians doesn't mean local residents will easily forget one's dismal performance in office and deliver the votes.

Still, the bottom line is performance, not appearances.

—EDWIN PIANO,
councilor, Olongapo City

Database on political killings now in place, CHR announces

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS yesterday said it had perfected a database that would help the government fast-track its efforts to solve the extrajudicial killings in the country.

Called the "Martus" database—a Greek word for witness—the Web-based system is expected to assist the CHR in accurately collecting and collating information from its 15 regional offices about the murders.

According to Ed Diansuy, CHR spokesperson, it will also allow for the "express" prosecution and trial of cases as the CHR will have quick access to data for analysis and immediate referral to the Presidential Human Rights Committee.

Diansuy said the CHR had already shared the database with the PHRC.

The CHR came up with the electronic database about two years ago with the assistance of the Asia Foundation, which provided the information system, Diansuy told the Inquirer.

"It has already been fine-tuned. It now provides end-users (CHR personnel) more detailed information on certain incidents," he explained.

He said such a development would prove to the public that the government was not sitting on the reported extrajudicial killings.

The human rights group Karapatan has accused security forces of killing more than 800 political activists since President Macapagal-Arroyo took office in 2001. The Inquirer's tally lists 296 militants and 50 journalists killed during the period.

'No to HR abuses in Asia's most ...

From page A1

leading newspaper executives in the Asia-Pacific region, including the Inquirer.

Attended by some 400 delegates, the conference is being held in the Philippines for the first time.

Her remarks came a day after an international forum in the Netherlands concluded after a five-day hearing that the Arroyo administration, with the support of the US government, was responsible for the forced disappearances and murders of activists.

Several European countries as well as US officials had also voiced concern over the human rights situation in the country.

Last month, the Bush administration said Ms Arroyo had not done enough to deal with security forces under her command who were allegedly involved in the killings.

In February, UN Rapporteur Philip Alston told reporters in Manila that some of the killings had been convincingly attributed to the Armed Forces of the Philippines but that the AFP was in a state "of almost total denial."

"Speaking of crime, let me take this opportunity to once again deplore extrajudicial killings whether they be from Left or Right, especially against journalists," Ms Arroyo said.

Sordid history

"We have a sordid history in our nation of political violence; we aim to break this cycle of violence once and for all," she said.

Ms Arroyo welcomed the offer by the European Union to send over experts to help Philippine law enforcers solve the crimes.

"We're prepared to work with legitimate institutions and well-meaning allies in the international community on this issue," she said.

Ms Arroyo said her administration also welcomed US offers to help "in the fight versus wrong and the quest for impartial justice."

Dutch envoy statement welcomed

But she added: "It must be said that the Communist Party (of the Philippines) and their armed insurgents must also put down their arms and cease their mindless murders."

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye welcomed the statements by Dutch Ambassador Robert Vornis calling the Permanent People's Tribunal (PPT) that held the Hague hearings and issued findings adverse to the administration a kangaroo tribunal.

Bunye also welcomed "the fair statement" by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales that the rebels were as much to blame for the political killings.

"We acknowledge the fair statement of Cardinal Rosales," he said.

Report toned down?

At a press conference, Presidential Human Rights Committee Executive Director Cecilia Quisumbing said that Alston had dropped some of his criticisms of the Philippines' handling of the human rights situation in the draft of his preliminary report to the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

Quisumbing said Alston was to present last night his preliminary report to the UNHRC in Geneva, Switzerland.

She said the government was able to obtain a copy of the draft and that in it, Alston did not repeat his previous public observations that "the AFP is in denial about the extrajudicial killings" and that "left-leaning organizations are denied opportunity to participate in mainstream political process."

UN sanction unlikely

"The PHRC analysis is that Alston no longer believes these are among the most critical issues regarding the extrajudicial killings and the government approach to the issue," Quisumbing said.

She said this was likely the result of the proactive information sharing done by the PHRC after the Alston visit, wherein several updates on government actions were sent to him.

Quisumbing said that a UN sanction against the Philippines was not likely to happen as a result of the Alston report because Alston himself had acknowledged the Philippine government's efforts to solve the killings.

No sanctions

She said the UNHRC did not resort to sanctions unless the situation was dire, such as the genocide in Sudan.

Quisumbing also said that a UN special rapporteur was not a UN official but an expert in his field who served as a consultant to the United Nations.

Militant groups yesterday took to the streets to laud the PPT's verdict against the Arroyo administration.

Some 300 members of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, Anakpawis and Bayan Muna, among others, marched to Plaza Miranda in Quiapo, Manila, where they held a rally.

"The tribunal aims to draw global attention to the human rights situation in the country so that the killings would stop," rally leader Renato Reyes said. *With reports from Cynthia D. Balana, Tina G. Santos, TJ Burgonio and Inquirer Research*

Cory expresses alarm over spate of killings

From page A1

Aquino said: "It's a cause for alarm, of course, and it's not only here in the Philippines where people have questioned such killings."

Many are "wanting to know what the government has done about these killings," she added.

Aquino indicated that international attention could help solve the killings, whose victims included mainly activists identified with leftist groups.

CORY: Many want to know what the government is doing. REM ZAMORA

Nothing wrong

"In the past, when I ran in 1986, there were foreign observers also in the conduct of our elections, and this helped a lot because they were able to report on the actual situation prevailing at the time," she said.

Asked if this would not be intervening in Philippine affairs, she said: "We will know if there is intervention. But if they're just observers, there is nothing wrong because they will just report what they see."

Aquino challenged the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos in the 1986 "snap" election and the presence in the country of foreign observers, including the media, helped expose cheating and voter intimidation tactics during the polls. This helped spark the People Power revolt that toppled Marcos.

Blame it on RP leaders

Aquino said she was saddened by the Philippines' being called the most corrupt country in Asia in a survey of foreign businessmen conducted by a Hong Kong-based risk consultancy firm.

"In fact, I have listened to two homilies in which the priests had also expressed alarm and sadness at [the Philippines] being labeled the most corrupt," she said.

She said the Philippines' reputation for being corrupt may be attributed to its leaders.

Campaigning for Noynoy

"When they say it's the most corrupt, then it has to do, of course, with the leaders of our country and the administration," she said.

The 74-year-old Aquino said she was busy campaigning for her son, Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, who is running for the Senate, but that her age did not allow her to actively campaign for anyone else.

"Of course, if some members of the Genuine Opposition (GO) are there, I will support them. At my age, I cannot campaign for the others, since I go alone anyway."

She did not categorically say the people should vote for GO candidates, opting only to comment: "It's for all of us voters to study well the qualifications of the candidates who are asking for our support."

Oreta's apology

"From their past experiences, we can have a better assessment of what they stand for, what they are prepared to do, and how they will protect us," Aquino said.

Aquino was also asked to comment on the television ads of her sister-in-law, Tessie Aquino-Oreta, apologizing for her infamous 2001 dance at the height of the impeachment trial of then President Joseph Estrada, who was later ousted from office.

"I haven't seen that. I only read about it in the papers. But if she feels it's the way to ask for forgiveness, then so be it," she said.

Asked if the apology would boost Oreta's chances of winning, Aquino said: "I don't really know. I think she didn't care one way or the other whether it will be a plus or a minus for her, but I think she just wanted to get it off her chest."

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Bayan Muna tops survey; party-list groups may win 17 seats

From page A1

every 10 (58 percent) registered voters—an estimated 26 million Filipinos—voted for a party-list group.

Respondents were asked the question: "If elections were to take place today, what party would you most probably vote for in the party-list?"

Bayan Muna's allied organizations—Anakpawis (6.2 percent) and Gabriela (5.8 percent)—retained their No. 2 and No. 3 positions, respectively.

But Anakpawis' share of the votes slipped from 10.5 percent, and that of Gabriela from 8.4 percent.

A Teacher, Suara

They were followed by Aangat Ka Pilipino (5 percent), Akbayan (3.9 percent), Anak Mindanao (Amin, 3 percent), Citizen's Battle Against Corruption (Cibac, 2.3 percent), Anak (2.3 percent), A Teacher (2.2 percent), Suara (2 percent) and Aangat Tayo (2 percent).

Aangat Ka Pilipino is a newly registered party-list group headed by Educardo C. Morales.

Anak (Aangat ang Kabuhayan) and Aangat Tayo, also newly formed organizations, were among the 11 party-list groups identified by Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales as "front organizations" of the Arroyo administration.

Aangat Tayo, based in Pandacan, Manila, is headed by Teddie Elson Rivera.

Suara, which seeks to represent Filipino Muslims, is also allied with Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela.

Gabriela, which currently has one seat occupied by Rep. Liza Maza, is poised to gain another seat—one less seat than in February when the group was poised to gain two more seats.

Anakpawis could still gain an additional seat aside from those already occupied by Crispin Beltran and Rafael Mariano.

Anak Mindanao could retain its current seat occupied by Rep. Mujiv Hataman.

Akbayan down from 4.2%

Cibac, which failed to meet the 2-percent requirement in the survey last month, was also poised to retain the seat occupied by Rep. Emmanuel Joel Villanueva.

Akbayan, with 3.9 percent of the votes, down from 4.2 percent, could keep only two of its current three seats. The group is currently represented by Rosales (who is on her third and last term), Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel and Mario Aguja.

Votes for Aangat Tayo were down to 2 percent from 4.4 percent, which meant that the group may get only one seat instead of two.

Aangat ka Pilipino, which has 5 percent of the votes this month, may get two seats, instead of the three seats it was set to gain in the previous survey when it got 6.2 percent.

Anak and A Teacher were poised to get one seat each.

An Waray (1.8 percent) and Aba Ako (1.2 percent) failed to meet the minimum 2-percent rule.

An Waray's votes dropped from 5.1 percent in February, when it was set to gain one more seat, in addition to the one already occupied by Rep. Florencio Noel.

For its part, Aba Ako was poised to gain one seat in February (2.3 percent).

Other groups "below, but within the statistical reach of the threshold" were the Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives (Apec, 1.8 percent), Partido ng Manggagawa (PM, 1.8 percent), Abono (1.6 percent) and Buhay (1.6 percent).

Within reach

Other groups also within reach were Kabataan, formerly the militant group Anak ng Bayan (1.5 percent), Coop-Natcco (1.5 percent), Anak Mahirap (1.5 percent), Sanlakas (1.5 percent), FPJPM (1.2 percent), Assalam (1.1 percent), Babae Ka (1.1 percent) and Aba Ilonggo (1 percent).

Groups that exceed the winning percentage points may not pass on the excess to other groups.

"In the Philippine party-list vote-computation system, parties' votes exceeding the exact 2-percent, 4-percent or 6-percent proportions are unusable surpluses, which lessen the scope for other groups to achieve the 2-percent threshold, and thus make it virtually impossible to fill up the available party-list seats completely," SWS said in a statement yesterday.

Under Republic Act No. 7941 (the Party-list System Act of 1995), 20 percent of the total number of seats in the House is reserved for party-list groups.

The party-list system is enshrined in the 1987 Constitution to enable marginalized sectors to take part in the crafting of laws.

The SWS survey was conducted using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 registered voters nationwide (300 each in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao).

The sample included every city and municipality in Metro Manila and at least one province in every region in the three other areas.

As for the survey's margin of error, the SWS said: "The margin for sampling error of a proportion slides downward, as the proportion gets farther from 50 percent.

For a sample size of 1,200, a margin [of error] of plus or minus 2.5 percent[age points] should be applied to proportions in the vicinity of 25 percent. A margin of [error of] plus or minus 2 percent[age points] applies to proportions in the vicinity of 15 percent, and a margin of plus or minus 1 percent[age point] applies to proportions in the vicinity of 3 percent."

"With a survey outcome of at least 3 percent, it is statistically safe to say that a party has truly reached the threshold of 2 percent. On the other hand, a survey outcome of below 1 percent makes it statistically very unlikely that the threshold has in truth been reached," the SWS said. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

Abalos tells critics: I am not my brother's keeper, not my fault if he runs

From page A1

Sr. yesterday defended the nomination of his elder brother Arsenio by Biyaheng Pinoy, a party-list group composed of tricycle drivers that the poll body has accredited.

"It's not my fault if he wants to run. Is it bad to be nominated? He's been into politics longer than me. So, I can't stop him from organizing this," Abalos told reporters at a press conference.

The Comelec chair said his brother, a doctor, was a barangay chair and president of the barangay league in Mandaluyong City for many years.

He said Arsenio's nomination probably stemmed from his helping tricycle driver associations in Mandaluyong and elsewhere get franchises, fix routes and set up terminals.

Abalos said he did not even know his brother got nominated because Biyaheng Pinoy only presented its nominees after it was accredited.

"The candidates are not the nominees. It's the party-list group," he said.

Track record

The Comelec, according to Abalos, does not focus on personalities but on performance and track record in helping underrepresented and marginalized sectors when accrediting groups for the party-list elections.

The Comelec chair has been criticized by Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales for accrediting a group led by his brother.

"There's a conflict of interest," Rosales said Monday.

She identified Biyaheng Pinoy as among the 11 government-supported groups running under the party-list system in May.

The others were Ahon Pinoy!, Babae Ka!, Ang Kasangga, Akbay Pinoy, Aksyon Sambayanan (Aksa), Agbiag!, Aangat Tayo, Aangat ang Kabuhayan (Anak), Alliance for Nationalism and Democracy (Anad), and Kakusa.

"A party-list group is prohibited by law from getting government backing of any kind. I do hope someone will file a case on this," Abalos said.

He said Comelec decisions on accreditation were based on evidence and not on mere speculation or hearsay.

One of the party-list groups accused of fronting for Malacañang turned the tables on Akbayan, alleging that the militant organization once supported President Macapagal-Arroyo in the 2004 elections.

"They should answer for that," an incensed Raul Lambino of the Barangay Associations for National Advancement and Transparency (Banat) told the INQUIRER.

Lambino is the spokesperson of Sigaw ng Bayan, the group backed by Malacañang in the failed attempt to revise the Constitution through a signature campaign last year.

Political insurance policy

Rosales accused Sigaw ng Bayan of fielding at least four dummy party-list organizations in the coming elections. The move was supposedly meant to be a "political insurance policy" to keep another impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo from prospering in the 14th Congress.

"They're bastardizing the party-list system," Lambino said, referring to Rosales and her group.

"The problem is they are capitalizing on the GMA (President Arroyo) issue and resorting to name-calling simply because groups like ours are promoting programs similar to those of GMA," he said.

Sought for comment, Rosales told the INQUIRER in a text message: "Can't he even be original? He throws back at us behavior he is guilty of—a GMA stooge bastardizing the party-list system after failing to bastardize the people's initiative by forging signatures and deceiving the people. He deserves public contempt and rejection even before the 2007 polls."

Lambino said he was wondering why Rosales wasn't picking on other party-list groups supposedly fronting for religious organizations. He cited Buhay and Cibac, which were represented in the 13th Congress by Rene Velarde and Joel Villanueva, respectively.

Velarde is the son of El Shaddai leader Bro. Mike Velarde while Villanueva is the son of Bro. Eddie Villanueva of the Jesus Is Lord Movement.

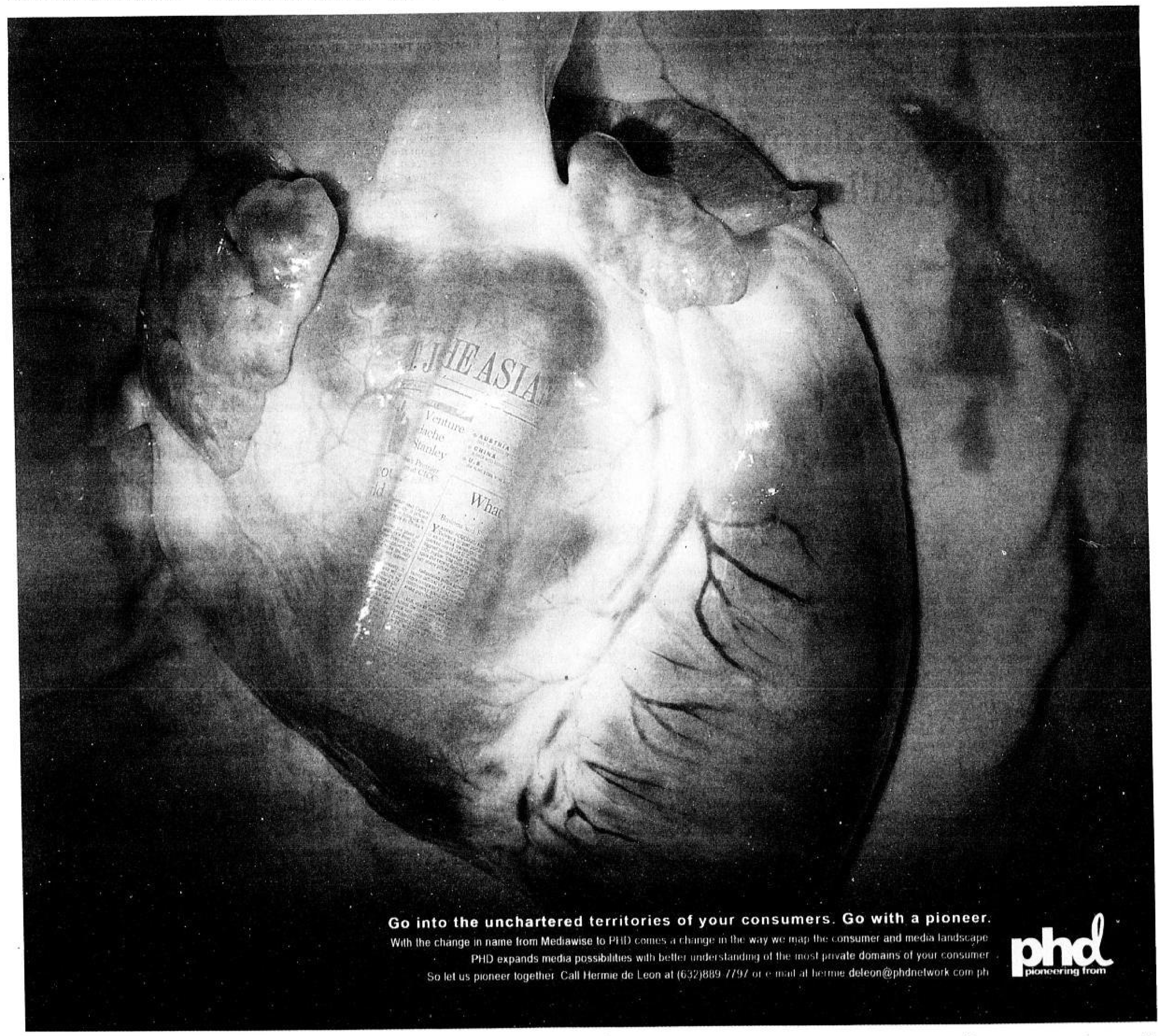
"It's unfortunate that Akbayan has made accusations against us," Lambino said. "(It's) trying to brand groups not conforming with (its) agenda. If we wanted, we could have referred to (it) as a group with a communist-type discipline."

Frequent travelers abroad

Lambino also took issue with the "lifestyle" of Rosales, her fellow Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel and economist Walden Bello, one of the group's nominees in the May elections.

"Are they marginalized?" he asked. "They're living luxurious lives. They've been frequently traveling abroad."

Lambino said his Banat group was legitimate, citing an advocacy zeroing in on the "autonomy and decentralization of the power of government, education, health, housing and national support for investment in agriculture and industries in the countryside."



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GMA to media: Report good …

From page A1

Pichai Chuensuksawadi, regional committee chair of Ifra Asia which organized Publish Asia 2007, said it was the first time a head of government addressed the conference.

The President, who was accompanied by her spokesperson, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, pointed out that she was appearing at the conference twice yesterday—at the opening ceremony in the morning and at the dinner.

"Why is Publish Asia so important that the head of the country would be with you twice in one day? It is our message, it is our way of saying that we Filipinos believe in the freedom of the press. And this is our way of saying that we thank you for your role in broadening our regional frontiers in trade, security and political consolidation," Ms Arroyo told the gathering.

She added: "We embrace the central role of the media in a free society and we believe that responsible media bridge the gap between the public and the government.

"Not that we always agree with the members of the media; many times we don't agree with [them] and what they report. But that is just part of the give and take of politics, and that is just part of our job."

Moving nation forward

Ms Arroyo, who has imposed a no-political-questions rule on the Malacañang Press Corps, said her agenda was "to move the nation forward toward greater political stability, economic prosperity and peace and order."

"The national agenda is focused on creating good-paying jobs, stable prices and bringing the benefits of a strong economy to every single Filipino," she said.

"Our government has made the tough but necessary decisions to strengthen our economy. These painful steps are paying off. We now have the money to invest in jobs creation, new roads, bridges and ports and more for education and health care. For the first time in a long time, the government is doing what average households do—working to balance the budget and not keep going into debt. We're concerned with real everyday challenges that confront the people—alleviating hunger, creating jobs and checking prices of essential items."

Media's share

The President said the media had a share in the making of a more modern, just and prosperous nation,

She observed that the members of Publish Asia represented different countries with different political systems, levels of development and social organizations.

"But in all the countries in which you do your business, the press has the power to change the nation through information and persuasion," Ms Arroyo said.

"A free, dynamic and responsible press can set the people moving toward the right direction of national renewal and reform. And even as we dish out the raw and hard truth in different degrees and in the different countries, depending on the norms in a particular country, all of you would serve your country well by having good news that unite and inspire," she said.

"It is in this spirit that we the Filipino people welcome all the participants to this great and important conference."

Balanced reporting

Speaking with reporters after the President left the conference, Bunye said the Arroyo administration believed that the reporting by the media has been "balanced."

"And we could say that they have tried to observe responsibility as much as possible," he said.

Bunye also said responsible media was defined by the ethics of journalists.

"I think the speech of the President said it very clearly: We could not agree all the time; it's very important that responsible media point the way to the people so that we can work together," he said.

Asked if the President's statements showed that her view of the media was different from that of her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, Bunye said: "I cannot speak for the First Gentleman, but I can understand how he feels."

Technology shaking media but papers still …

From page A1

lishing that organizes Publish Asia, said in his welcome address at the Polkabal Ballroom of the Manila Hotel that "fighting over the attention of consumers has become the new game."

"Today's readers are both publishers and readers of content," he said. "A big driver of media is technology. Technology is shaking the business."

The theme of this year's conference, held for the first time in the country, is "Reinventing for Today's Business, Creating for Tomorrow's Challenges."

Murdoch Maclennan, CEO of the United Kingdom's The Telegraph Media Group (whose keynote speech was read by Mittelbach because he was unable to make it to Manila), said the two-day forum would focus on "media convergence."

Maclennan noted that "young people now preferred reading online, and were also in the habit of creating content." With the consumer environment constantly changing, he said not evolving was "no longer an option."

"There is no such thing as old and new media—there's just media," he said, emphasizing the divergence of all news sources.

He denied that access to huge audiences could lead to the demise of the newspaper, and that online versions would spell the end of newspapers.

Papers in pretty good shape

"For something like that we appear to be in pretty good shape," Maclennan said, citing the existence of some 10,000 daily newspapers in the world. *(Story on Page A1.)*

He said newspapers all over the world had suffered declining readership. He said this was due to faster, alternative sources of news, such as the Internet. Online advertising, according to Maclennan, was up from $10 billion in 2004 to $31 billion last year.

"Printed newspaper products are under pressure like never before. We should be agents of dialogue with the public. People are no longer passively consuming media; they are now actively participating," he said.

It was a mistake, he said, to consider the combination of forces as "poisonous," and that newspaper owners and journalists alike should embrace the challenges that come their way.

Pinoy multimedia consumers

In the Philippines, INQUIRER executive vice president Dave Valdes said, consumers were becoming more multimedia. To illustrate, he said, "they read newspapers in the morning, listen to the radio inside the car, surf the Internet in the office and receive breaking news on their mobile phones."

INQUIRER president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, an Ifra Philippine committee member, said her newspaper was addressing these growing needs by pioneering in many areas that were considered cutting-edge.

"I can proudly say that we started the process a long time ago and now we are reaping the benefits," she said.

Romualdez cited the free newspaper Libre and Inquirer Compact as examples of ideas she picked up from attending Publish Asia.

Valdes added that before Libre came out in 2001, he had observed that very few people were reading in the rail transit stations.

Valdes revealed that initially there were concerns from some reporters on the concept of passing on their stories to the online version of the paper, Inquirer.net, and to breaking news advisories being received by subscribers on their cell phones. He said they were apprehensive about losing "scoops" and wondered why they should give the stories they had worked hard on to "another company."

News a core product

"At the INQUIRER we realized that convergence was not something we could do overnight," Valdes said. However, he said the group has since realized that its core product was "news information," not just the newspaper.

The INQUIRER group of companies has since expanded to tabloids like Bandera, specialized magazines like Golf Digest and Mobile Philippines, the Cebu Daily News for the Visayas and Inquirer.net, which receives around 40,000 hits per day.

"We have to face challenges with the proper mind-set," said Romualdez, adding that even the concept of news was changing.

A traffic jam or the suspension of classes may not be considered news in the "old sense," she said, but people nowadays want to receive something that affects them in their everyday lives.

"News has to be functional and helpful," Romualdez said. "If anything, journalists are the least affected (by convergence) because the output they produce will still be used."

President Macapagal-Arroyo opened the conference, making her the first leader of a country to attend the gathering of journalists all over the world.

Disturbing feeling

Romualdez said she agreed with Ms Arroyo that there was freedom of the press in the country and that she was also glad to hear the President address the extrajudicial killings "because journalists are affected."

"On one hand, there's a free press but there's still this disturbing fact that journalists are being killed while doing their job," Romualdez said.

Newsroom management, business and advertising strategies, circulation, readership and audience were among the topics covered by sessions in Publish Asia 2007.

To be held tonight in Intramuros is the conference highlight—the 6th Asia Media Awards. It will honor print media outfits with the Best in Design, Best in Infographics, Best in Print, Best in Newspaper Supplement and Best in Photojournalism awards.

Erap talks of Joc-joc, hunger, killings

From page A1

The antigraft court strictly ordered him not to engage in any political activity during his brief furlough.

But Estrada deftly flirted with the rules set by the court and in a 30-minute speech assailed the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo for the increasing incidence of hunger, corruption and political killings.

"One of the things that we should be proud of in our town is that fewer people go hungry here," he said in Filipino.

"We have been named as the most corrupt in Asia. We have also received international attention not because of our progress but because of extrajudicial killings … I am disturbed and apprehensive for the future of our country," he added in English—a language that, he said in jest, he has been mastering while in detention.

'Not a saint'

Estrada did not mention Ms Arroyo by name, but briefly referred to former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-joc" Bolante, who is being held in a US prison after repeatedly evading an inquiry of the Philippine Senate into the P728-million fertilizer fund scam.

He also said "cheating" had become "a way of life" in the country, alluding to allegations that Ms Arroyo stole the 2004 presidential election (which the latter has denied) as well as the tainted nursing board exam in 2006.

"I am not saying that I am a saint. I have committed mistakes [during my term], but corruption was never one of them," Estrada declared.

He also said the Arroyo administration had twice offered him the option of exile in exchange for the dropping of charges against him. "But I did not take it because I am innocent…" he said, adding:

"Hindi ako katulad ng mga kasama nila na tumatakbo, katulad ni Joc-joc ba iyon? Kahit ikulong pa nila ako hindi ako aalis … Hindi ko iiwan ang San Juan at ang masang Pilipino (I'm not like their people who flee, like Joc-joc. Even if they throw me in jail, I won't leave San Juan and the Filipino people)."

"I hope I have acquitted myself to merit and deserve the honor awarded to me," Estrada said of the award that recognized his "notable" accomplishments and contributions to San Juan in the field of leadership.

He challenged San Juan residents to rise to the occasion and become outstanding citizens in their simple way, "to rescue and redeem our country."

'Laban tayo'

At the commemorative parade that started at 9 a.m., not one senatorial candidate of the Genuine Opposition ticket was present.

But Estrada, the acknowledged leader of the United Opposition, chanted "Go, Go, laban tayo (let's fight)!" after saying that he had not lost hope in his search for justice.

Thousands of San Juan residents braved the summer heat to join the parade, shouting: "Erap, we love you!"

Police estimated that at least 5,000 people took part in the motorcade that started at the Pinaglabanan Shrine and ended at the San Juan City Hall. About 2,000 stayed to listen to Estrada's speech.

Said Mayor Ejercito: "We are very happy, especially the people of San Juan. They, too, missed the President."

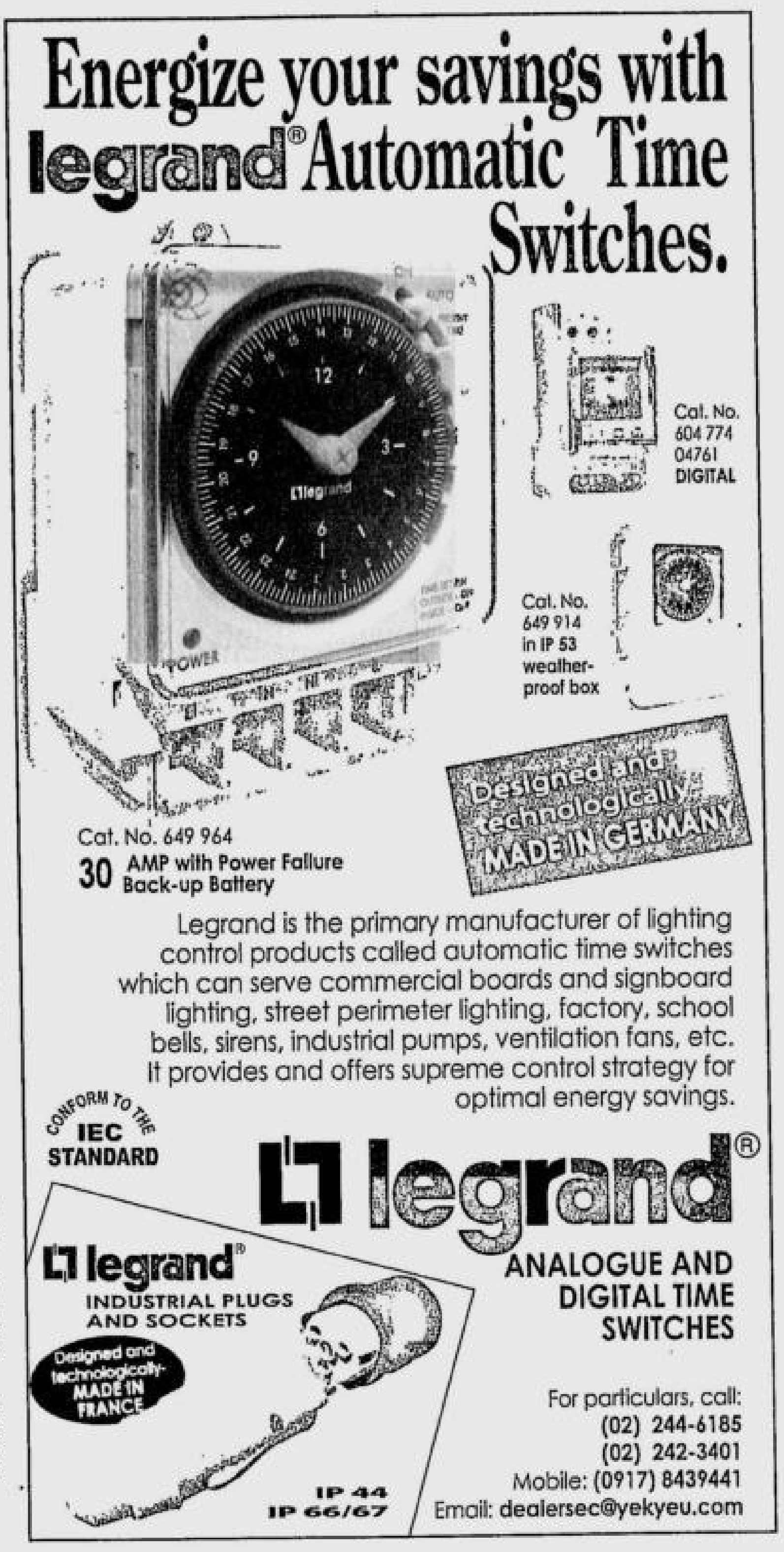
He said that after the celebration, his father would proceed to Greenhills to visit his 102-year-old grandmother and receive relatives and close friends.

"We will make the most of the visit," he said.

The mayor dismissed comments that his father could get into trouble because of his fighting speech, saying that the latter was only trying to inspire the people of San Juan.

"I think the speech was generally making use of the spirit to rebuild the nation," Ejercito said. "If you are fighting for the nation, you have to say what you believe in."

The mayor also said that if administration allies would interpret his father's remarks negatively, it would probably be because they were true.



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REGIONAL TRIAL COURT (RTC): (REGION V) – LEGASPI CITY, ALBAY: (Br. 2) ALMODOVAR, Ignacio Jr. N.; **ALTEA**, Ma. Eden H.; **BASE**, Arsenio Jr. N.; **CAAYAO**, Leo Arnel M.; **CABREDO**, Agustin B.; **CAMPOMANES**, Marilyn R.; **DE LEOZ**, Mary May B.; **DELFIN**, Joselito R.; **ESCARO**, Roberto A.; **GEROMO**, Reyes G.; **JIMENEZ**, Bernardo Jr. R; **LOQUILLANO**, Ma. Theresa SJ.; **MALAZARTE**, Cesar E.; **MANGENTE**, Job M.; **MUÑOZ**, Levi P.; **PURA**, Valentin Jr. E.; **RAMOS**, Benjamin R.; **REGINO**, Edmiro V.; **SANGIL**, Titus A.; **TABORA**, Perfecto Nixon C.; **TAYO**, Romeo S. **NAGA CITY, CAMARINES SUR: (Br. 22 & 23) AGOR**, Dominador A.; **AREJOLA**, Ramon A.; **ARROYO**, Ma. Angela A.; **BENAVIDEZ**, Pastor J.; **BOBIS**, Rolando DL.; **BONCODIN**, Irma Isidora M.; **BORJA**, Crispo Jr. Q.; **CONTRERAS**, Manuel E.; **CU**, Richard T.; **DIMABAYAO**, Salve Eva V.; **ESCARO**, Roberto A.; **FLORIN**, Isabel E.; **GUERRERO**, Fernando Jr. Y.; **KATAPANG**, Manuel M.; **LABASTIDA**, Philip G.; **MARISTAZA**, Romulo R.; **MUÑOZ**. Levi P.; **NACIONAL**, Jose P.; **PAULITE**, Noel DG.; **PURA**, Valentin Jr.; E. **ROSALES**, Rodulfo M.; **SAEZ**, Mansueto SJ.; **SANTOS**, Efren G.; **TAYO**, Romeo S.; **IRIGA CITY, CAMARINES SUR: (Brs. 34 & 60) AGOR**, Dominador A.; **ARROYO**, Ma. Angela A.; **BOBIS**, Rolando DL; **BORJA**, Crispo Jr. Q.; **BRIGUERA**, Henry V.; **CAAYAO**, Leo Arnel M.; **CABREDO**, Agustin B., **CONTRERAS**, Manuel E.; **DELA CRUZ**, Victor C.; **DIMABAYAO**, Salve Eva V.; **ESCARO**, Roberto A.; **JIMENEZ**, Bernardo Jr. R.; **KATAPANG**, Manuel M.; **LABASTIDA**, Philip G.; **MARISTAZA**, Romulo R.; **MUÑOZ**, Levi P.; **PANGA**, Timoteo Jr. A.; **PRIMA**, Eulogio I.; **PURA**, Valentin Jr. E.; **ROSALES**, Rodulfo M. **SAN JOSE CITY, CAMARINES SUR: (Brs. 30 & 58) ARROYO**, Ma. Angela A.; **BERAMO**, Danilo B.; **BOBIS**, Rolando DL.; **BORJA**, Crispo Jr. Q.; **BRIGUERA**, Henry V.; **CLAVECILLA**, Marvel C.; **CU**, Richard T.; **DIMABAYAO**, Salve Eva V.; **ESCARO**, Roberto A.; **LABASTIDA**, Philip G.; **MARTIZANO**, Orlando A.; **NACIONAL**, Jose P.; **PAULITE**, Noel DG; **SAEZ**, Mansueto SJ.; **SANTOS**, Efren G. **DAET, CAMARINES NORTE: (Br. 38) AREJOLA**, Ramon A.; **BOBIS**, Rolando DL.; **CAAYAO**, Leo Arnel M.; **CONTRERAS**, Manuel E.; **DY**, Jose G.; **ESCARO**, Roberto A.; **MORENO**, Ronald B. **LABO, CAMARINES NORTE: (Br. 64) BOBIS**, Rolando DL.; **BORJA**, Crispo Jr. Q.; **BRAGAIS**, Zenaida N.; **ESCARO**, Roberto A.; **LABASTIDA**, Philip G.; **RODULFO**, Juan T. **SORSOGON, SORSOGON: (Br. 52) ABLES**, Maximino R.; **BORJA**, Crispo Jr. Q.; **DEALCA**, Juan S.; **ERNACIO**, Josue F.; **FLORIN**, Isabel E.; **GELLA**, Victor C.; **PURA**, Valentin Jr. E.

MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES (MTCC): (REGION III) – SAN FERNANDO CITY, PAMPANGA: (Br. 1) AGUILA, Dennis E.; **DE GUZMAN**, Caliope Jr. L.; **GARCIA**, Oliver S.; **MALIG**, Robert Alexande R.; **PACQUING**, Felipe IV M.; **RAÑOLA**, Corazon D.; **RAÑOLA**, Juan Jr. G.; **SAGUM**, Lamberto G.; **SERFINO**, Francisca M.; **TOLENTINO**, Ma. Lourdes F.; UY, William T. **(REGION VI) – PASSI CITY, ILOILO**: **HIBALLES**, Maricar V.

MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT (MTC): (REGION V) – PIO DURAN, ALBAY: BARCELONA, Rosalina B.; **CESAR**, Arnel P.; **DOTE**, Luis R. **RAPU-RAPU, ALBAY: BARCELONA**, Rosalina B.; DOTE, Luis R.; **MALAZARTE**, Cesar E. **DONSOL, SORSOGON: BARCELONA**, Rosalina B.; **CESAR**, Arnel P.; **MUEGO**, Josefina F.; **ZURBITO**, Rafael Jr. H. **PILAR, SORSOGON: CESAR**, Arnel P.; **DOTE**, Luis R.; **MALAZARTE**, Cesar E.; **MUEGO**, Josefina F.; **ZURBITO**, Rafael Jr. H.

MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURT (MCTC): (REGION IV) – IMELDA-SAN VICENTE-SAN LORENZO, CAMARINES NORTE: BELEN, Elaine Gay R.; LORIA, Perfecto M.; **PORMENTO**, Evilio C. **SAN FERNANDO-BUTUAN, MASBATE:** BAILON, Meriecris D.; **FRANCISCO**, Vicente B.; **SERRA**, Gina B. **SAN JACINTO-MONREAL, MASBATE: BAILON**, Meriecris D.; **BANDONG** Jesus N.; **ZURBITO**, Rafael Jr. H. **(REGION VIII) – MOTIONG-JIABONG-SAN JOSE DE BUAN, SAMAR; ESTORNINOS**, Filotea M.

The public may submit sworn complaint, written report, or opposition against any of the aforesaid applicants not later than April 10, 2007.

March 27, 207.

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Clerk of Court & JBC
Ex-Officio Secretary

(PDI–March 28, 2007)

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TARLAC SITUATIONER

No opposition, unified slate, free zone

By Jo Martinez-Clemente
Tarlac City

EXCEPT FOR TARLAC REP. BENIGno "Noynoy" Aquino III, who is running for senator under the Genuine Opposition, there is hardly any opposition ticket in Tarlac in the May 14 elections.

Neither is there a unified slate for the administration coalition's Lakas-CMD, Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) and Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) nor a declaration that Tarlac will be a "*zona libre*" (free zone).

As in days of old, Tarlac once more is divided between two blocs of the powerful Cojuangco clan. This time, both are in the same political coalition.

On one side is the NPC-Lakas group led by Rep. Gilberto Cojuangco Teodoro Jr. (NPC, first district) and Gov. Jose Yap (Lakas). On the other is Kampi, led by former Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr.

Both groups believe their slates carry Malacañang's blessings; thus, it is not a "free zone" among contenders of the administration allies.

Today, Kampi stalwarts led by its chair, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, will visit Tarlac to induct new members of the party, as well as distribute party nominations to its candidates. Among them are Patricia Jose "China" Cojuangco and some incumbent mayors who had already been given party nominations by Lakas and NPC.

China is the youngest daughter of Peping Cojuangco and former Gov. Margarita "Tingting" Cojuangco. The couple, President Macapagal-Arroyo, former Rizal Rep. Emigdio Tanjuatco Jr. and former Tarlac Rep. Herminio Aquino are the founding members of Kampi.

China is being pitted against the NPC's Monica Louise "Nikki" Prieto-Teodoro, a cousin-in-law, in the first congressional district. Nikki is the wife of Congressman Teodoro, who is serving his last term.

This impending battle between the Cojuangcos is the fourth since 1965.

The first was when Peping and estranged cousin, former Ambassador Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, fought it out in the first district where "Danding was clobbered by Peping."

It was a return bout between the cousins in 1969, but Peping withdrew his candidacy "to preserve peace and order" in the district. He pulled out on condition that the district be placed under the Commission on Elections' control and that the Constabulary detachment in his district be replaced by another group chosen by the Comelec.

In 1992, Danding's younger bother, Henry, clashed with Tingting for the gubernatorial post. Tingting won.

No 'zona libre'

Tarlac is no *zona libre* as the candidates for key positions in the province had long been settled by an arbitration committee composed of the presidents of the various parties in the coalition, according to Teodoro.

He said a complete slate would be fielded as he confirmed that his wife would file her certificate of candidacy regardless of who her opponent would be. His wife's candidacy has been endorsed by mayors and the administration coalition, he said.

Former Victoria Vice Mayor Victor Yap, the Lakas-NPC gubernatorial candidate, said he and third congressional district candidate Jeci Aquino Lapus had been endorsed by Ms Arroyo during her recent visit to Concepcion town.

Yap, 41, is a son and executive assistant of Governor Yap. He is a director of the Clark Development Corp. Lapus, on the other hand, is a younger brother of Education Secretary Jesli Lapus, whose final term as Tarlac representative was cut short with his appointment. The younger Lapus is a director of Philippine National Oil Co.

But Governor Yap chided Kampi officials for having "unauthorized signatories" in their nomination forms. Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, Kampi president, is the only one authorized to sign them, he said.

Yap said he could also get a Kampi nomination if he wanted to. Ms Arroyo has approved the inclusion of Kampi, Lakas and NPC in their campaign materials, he said.

Yap, 78, is serving his last term for governor and will run for representative of the second district. He had represented the district for five terms.

Ms Arroyo's endorsement of his son and Jeci Lapus was a manifestation that Tarlac is not a free zone, he said.

Even as Kampi readies its full slate, its provincial spokesperson, Rey Roy, said talks were ongoing on a "higher level" to prevent a clash among members of the coalition.

"It is important for the national leadership to be able to field a unified ticket in Tarlac because that is the very essence of a coalition and our calls for unity, especially so for a province where many national leaders come from," he said.

"That is why even as we are ready to fight and field a full slate, we are still batting for a unified ticket," he said.

Consolidation

Roy, a former Tarlac board member, was originally nominated by Kampi as its candidate for governor. He is the grandson of the late Sen. Jose Roy and son of former Vice Gov. Alfonso Roy.

With the entry of China Cojuangco in the congressional race and Kampi's big bang in Tarlac a day before the deadline for the filing of certificates of candidacy, it is likely that Peping will run for governor with Roy as his running mate.

Quiet the last nine years in local politics since his wife Tingting was defeated by the elder Yap in the 1998 gubernatorial race, Peping will not be giving up the province to the Yaps again.

PEPING Cojuangco

DANDING Cojuangco

NOYNOY Aquino

GILBERT Teodoro

APENG Yap

TINGTING Cojuangco

In 1998, after completing three terms in the House of Representatives, Yap, a longtime friend of the late former Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. and staunch ally of the Cojuangcos (Peping's side), realigned with Danding and won over Tingting in what was described as the fiercest political battle in the province in the post-Marcos era.

Yap also fielded his son, Victor, against Noynoy, a gesture that deeply hurt the Aquino and Cojuangco families. During the presidency of Corazon Cojuangco Aquino, Yap was appointed head of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System.

With Peping reconsidering his plan to run for governor, many incumbent officials are joining or rejoining Kampi, Roy said.

Victor Yap said he had seen this coming. "It is just good luck to all. I guess he (Peping) had it all calculated," he said.

Aquino vs Aquino

The same scenario among relatives is likely to happen in the third district.

Trying to get back an old post is former Rep. Herminio Aquino, who is running under Kampi. But Jeci Lapus, who filed his COC last week, said that while he submitted a Lakas nomination to the Comelec, he also had a Kampi nomination signed by Villafuerte, as well as a written manifestation of support from the administration coalition's arbitration committee.

Aquino ran for vice president in 2004 alongside the late Sen. Raul Roco, the standard-bearer of Aksyon Demokratiko.

Now a director of Petron, Aquino represented the district for three terms before Jesli Lapus, a relative, was elected.

Permanent home for parish on air

By Tonette Orejas
City of San Fernando

FOR THREE YEARS, THREE Catholic priests and dozens of volunteers had built a virtual parish on air from a makeshift studio, spreading the Gospel through 40 cable televisions and 48 radio stations throughout the country and up to Macau and Hong Kong.

Last month, their show, the "Men of Light," finally moved to a permanent home, care of "*kaparokya*" (co-parishioners) who believe that the Word must be heard and shared in the largely commercialized, entertainment-focused mass media.

The three-story building started from a donation of a bag of nails, according to Fr. Raul de los Santos, one of the program hosts. That humble contribution was no less similar to the P6,000 budget that got going what is now the Catholic Church's first archdiocese-based television ministry with such format, he says.

The remarkable spirit of sharing that typified the work since April 2003 has brushed on the builder, Baque Corp. It agreed to build even as the project still had to complete the P3-million budget.

It is precisely the sharing by its viewers and listeners that makes the show go into its 12th season or nearly 200 episodes, observes Bishop Bernardino Cortez, chair of the Episcopal commission on social communication and mass media.

"*Ang ganda nito* (This is a beautiful endeavor). The usual approach by media corporations is live on commercials. The support of this one comes from the grassroots, from below," Cortez says.

San Fernando Archbishop Paciano Aniceto, chair of the Archdiocesan Media Apostolate Network Unlimited (Amanu), led the celebration of the Mass on the grounds of the Social Action Center of Pampanga, where the building is located.

Some 200 parishioners came. They are but a fraction to the hundreds of people who have been quietly lending cameras, donating mini-DVD tapes, giving food and cash, preparing the sets, doing carpentry jobs and several more production errands to keep the weekly one-hour show going without hitches, according to Fr. Deogracias Kerr Galang, the youngest of the three hosts.

While the show has left its old home, a borrowed classroom at the University of the Assumption in San Fernando, the work remains a "struggle," according to Bishop Pablo David, the theologian among the hosts.

"We shall continue to struggle in the mass media where commercialization is the biggest scourge," David says. "With the public as our anchor, we shall stick to our mission."

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Army search leads to newly dug grave

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

HILONGOS, LEYTE—A POLICE FORENSIC TEAM found what appears to be a newly dug shallow grave here containing bones that team members said appear to be more than 10 years old in the government's continuing search for mass graves of supposed victims of a communist purge.

The six-member team from the Philippine National Police Crime Laboratory went to a burial site in Sitio Limon, more than 10 kilometers from San Antonio village.

The team unearthed the burial site with a skull and about five bones.

Members of the 43rd Infantry Battalion, under Col. Romeo Lacurom, secured the area on Monday.

Chief Insp. Mamerto Bernabe, head of the forensic team, said the grave was about 40 centimeters deep and appeared to be "not more than a year (old)."

Bernabe, however, said that while the grave appeared to be newly dug, the bones that it contained appeared to be more than 10 years old.

The remains belonged to at least two persons, he said.

The team took samples from the remains for testing if any of them belonged to Segundo Balonggo.

Balonggo, according to his brother Dionisio, was executed by the New People's Army in 1986 on suspicion that he was a military spy.

The forensic team took samples of Dionisio's saliva and blood for DNA testing and to find out if they matched those taken from the remains that are believed to be Balonggo's.

Dionisio, now a village watchman of San Antonio, said the NPA, led by a certain Eduardo Alugbate, also known as Ka Lende, killed his brother in 1986.

Dionisio said his brother was buried in the shallow grave that appeared to be not more than a year old.

He said a neighbor, Lorenzo Mainut, informed him of the grave back in 1987. He failed to explain why the grave appeared to be newly dug.

Dionisio said Segundo became a guerrilla while two other brothers, Santos and Celso, were NPA sympathizers. Santos and Celso, said Segundo, had disappeared.

Dionisio said he informed a soldier whom he knew only as Sir Dennis of the grave where his brother's remains were buried when they met by accident in February in Barangay Untanan, also in this town.

Maj. Gen. Armando Cunanan, 8th Infantry Division commanding general, said that while the grave appeared to have the remains of only one man, it would still prove the alleged cruelty committed by communist guerrillas against suspected spies.

Cunanan witnessed the unearthing of the grave with Chief Supt. Eliseo de la Paz, police regional chief.

Cunanan, however, said soldiers could still find more burial grounds in the town and in the neighboring towns of Inopacan and Hindang, where the guerrillas had been active in the past.

He dismissed accusations that the military was recycling human skeletal remains to build up cases against leftist party-list groups.

ELEKSYON 2007

It's Lakas vs Kampi in the provinces

THE REALIGNMENT OF FORCES continues at the local level as the March 30 deadline for the filing of candidacy for congressional and local seats nears.

Infighting among allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo in Isabela worsened after 20 Kabalikat ng Mamamayang Pilipino (Kampi) members in the province joined the ruling Lakas-CMD on March 20.

Gamu Mayor Fernando Cumigad, Lakas-Cagayan Valley secretary general and spokesperson, said most of the 20 Kampi members who left the Nationalist People's Coalition-Kampi local coalition were running for mayor and vice mayor in the May 14 elections.

He did not identify the 20 new Lakas members.

Isabela Rep. Anthony Miranda, Kampi-Cagayan Valley chair and national spokesperson, said he regretted the decision of the 20 Kampi members.

He said, however, that "this is proof that the multiparty system in this country contributes to the deterioration of party discipline."

The Lakas-Isabela coalesced with the Liberal Party-Drilon wing of Gov. Maria Gracia Cielo Padaca on Saturday.

Cumigad said the joining of forces was an answer to the merger of two prominent political clans, the Dys and the Albanos, who are trying to defeat Padaca in the May elections.

Laguna

An opposition congressman in Laguna is crying unfair treatment from the administration.

On Saturday, House Deputy Minority Leader and Laguna's fourth district Rep. Benjamin Agarao Jr. said the administration had made campaigning difficult for congressmen and local candidates from the opposition.

"The allies of the President got the lion's share while those with the opposition like me were left with no funds for projects in their district," Agarao said.

He said he got his pork barrel only in 2005.

Agarao said funds for administration congressmen were used for projects that were used as showcases for the campaign.

"This is part of politics but we will fight in a dignified way," he said.

Ilocos

Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is likely to support a mixed ticket of senatorial candidates from both the opposition and the administration but said he was likely to support more opposition candidates.

Marcos, who is running for representative of Ilocos Norte's second district, has not yet named the senatorial candidates he would support.

But he said the support would be thrown to the opposition for "having performed better than the administration in the last two years."

"Traditionally, we have always been adopting a mixed ticket but the opposition has done better in the last two years (in terms of senatorial candidates). We are still in consultation with our supporters as to who they believe is the best for the province," he said.

The governor, who is the president of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, hosted a joint press conference with opposition candidates Loren Legarda and John Osmeña at the provincial capitol auditorium.

Baguio

Bayan Muna brought the case of Rep. Satur Ocampo to Baguio City's streets on March 21 and wooed votes for three other party-list groups on behalf of the detained congressman.

Manny Loste, Bayan Muna-Baguio vice chair, told a crowd at the people's park that voting for Bayan Muna, as well as party-list groups Gabriela, Anakpawis and the newly formed Kabataan, would help foil the "martial rule" ambitions of the Arroyo administration.

Loste said the murder case against Ocampo had set back the party-list group's provincial schedule by three weeks because Bayan Muna nominees Neri Colmenares and Teodoro Casiño had been busy assisting Ocampo.

Colmenares is Ocampo's lawyer. Casiño has accompanied Ocampo since March 16 when Ocampo surfaced to challenge the murder case filed against him at the Supreme Court.

Pulse Asia's March survey results showed that Bayan Muna was still the most preferred party-list group, partly because of news concerning Ocampo's plight.

But Loste said the party-list groups had been compelled to resume their campaign because the military had been discrediting the political Left.

Naga City

An administration candidate who is being criticized for leaving the opposition continued to defend his transfer to the camp of President Macapagal-Arroyo, saying it was the result of his being left out in the camp of former President Joseph Estrada.

Former Sen. Vicente Sotto III said he was still bitter over his being ousted from the opposition's Senate ticket.

He said his removal and that of former Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta, was the result of lobbying by Senate President Manuel Villar.

Sotto said the original opposition ticket included himself, Oreta and former senator Gregorio Honasan.

But Villar's entry into the picture dislodged them from the ticket. *Aquiles Zonio, Inquirer Mindanao; Vincent Cabreza, Villamor Visaya Jr., Cristina Arzadon, Inquirer Northern Luzon; Niña Catherine Calleja and Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Priest's bid for Pampanga gov divides Catholic clerics

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon
and Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, *Inquirer Northern Luzon*

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo meets with her close friend Lilia Pineda, wife of suspected jueteng lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, at a recent birthday celebration of Mrs. Pineda. INQUIRER PHOTO

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Catholic clerics in Pampanga are divided over the gubernatorial bid of Fr. Eddie Panlilio, who is being seen here as the "alternative moral choice" to reelectionist Gov. Mark Lapid and Board Member Lilia Pineda in the May elections.

On Monday night, some 500 people massed at the convent where Panlilio was staying, mounting a prayer vigil that was expected to last until he files his certificate of candidacy on March 29.

Panlilio said the "differing views" among his brother-priests surfaced as he informed them of his plan in a general assembly here on Monday.

"Some held the view that priests should serve in the Church and not in government. Others expressed worry that critics of the Roman Catholic Church might use the occasion to malign the Church, dig out or fabricate wrongdoings against them or me," the 53-year-old priest told an ecumenical gathering of Catholic, Protestant, Methodist and Born-Again believers.

Some 30 priests and pastors joined the social hall of the St. James Cathedral in Betis, Guagua, a United Nations-declared heritage site, where Panlilio is the parish priest. They chanted his name and clapped vigorously as he entered the hall.

Panlilio told them that he was not inclined to immediately ignore the views of his fellow priests.

He asked the crowd if they could sustain the crusade for moral leadership and good governance, keep faith in the Catholic Church and defend it from criticisms during the 45-day election period.

The crowd replied, "*Wa pu* (Yes)!"

In Dagupan City, Archbishop Oscar Cruz said a priest could run for public office but would be suspended from the ministry by the bishops as called for in the Canon Law.

He also said a priest might face problems whether he wins or loses.

"The Church has a very clear provision saying that clerics are not allowed to hold an office in the government whether elective or appointive that shares in the exercise of civil power or authority," he said.

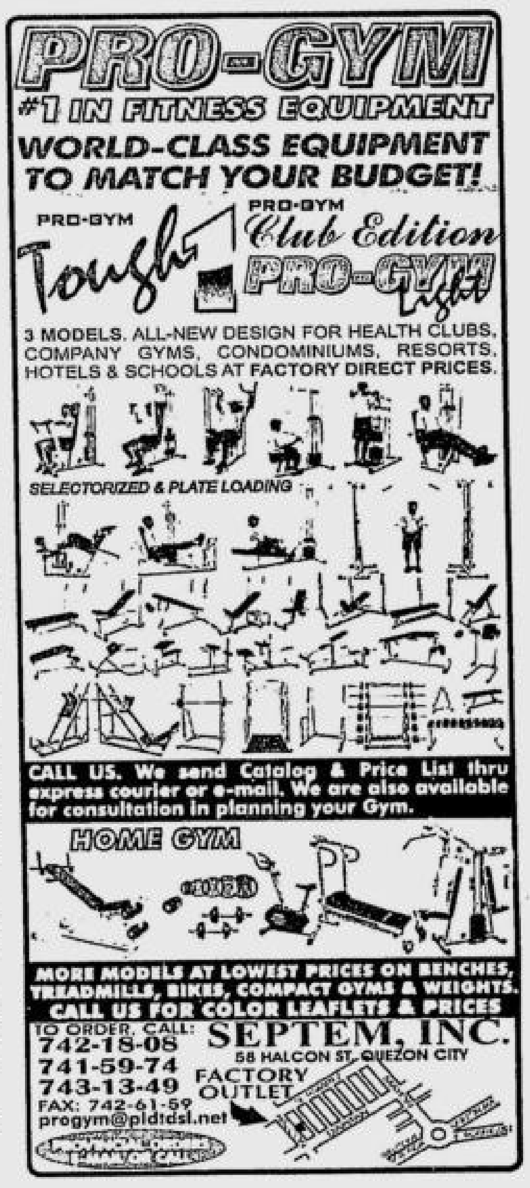
"(This is because) a priest has enough to do for the rest of his life and his primordial calling is to attend to socio-moral welfare of the people."

He said that if Panlilio would win, he "may find a big surprise of his life on how secular government is run and it's not impossible that he will get lost in facing a good number of difficulties just in case he would like to put order, integrity and honesty in the political governance."

Cruz also said Panlilio might find himself out of job if he would lose as he might not rejoin the priestly ministry.

While he may be reinstated as a priest, "it's in bad taste for him to seek reinstatement," said Cruz, who heads the archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan.

Many priests had run for public office in the past, and none of them had been reinstated, he said.



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Anti-dummy suit a boost to gov't case vs Piatco–DOJ

THE FILING OF ANTI-DUMMY LAW VIOLATIONS against officials of the Philippine International Air Terminals Corp. (Piatco) and its German partner Fraport may serve to strengthen the government side in an arbitration case being heard in Washington D.C. involving the voided contract for Naia Terminal 3, justice officials said.

The Office of the Solicitor General, which is handling the arbitration case for the government, believes it could benefit from the justice department's findings that Piatco and Fraport officers allegedly violated the law on limitations of foreign ownership of Philippine corporations, said Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

The Constitution provides that public utilities and services, such as airport terminals, should be 60 percent-owned by Filipinos, ensuring that Filipinos control the company's operations.

Gonzalez said a justice prosecutor's March 15 recommendation to file charges against the Piatco consortium officials could help bring about a favorable ruling for the Philippines in the arbitration case.

Piatco, a consortium that includes Fraport, built the still non-operating Naia Terminal III, the contract for which was nullified by the government and the Supreme Court.

Fraport has filed a $425-million recovery case with the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes in Washington D.C. to get back the money it spent to build Terminal 3.

Piatco has also filed a similar claim of $565 million with the International Chamber of Commerce in Singapore.

'Grandfather rule'

In a March 15 resolution, State Prosecutor Philip dela Cruz recommended the filing of charges of violations of the Anti-Dummy Law against officials of Piatco, Fraport and four other companies.

Those recommended charged were Piatco president Cheng Yong, Fraport senior vice president Peter Henkel and Jason Cheng, Jefferson Cheng, Rita Bonifer, Samin Aydin, Lilia Cheng, Hachiman Yokoi, Gil Camacho, Katherine Agnes Arnaldo, Joerg Seyffart, Marife Opulencia, Mary Antonette Manalo, Ricardo Castro Jr., Hans Arthur Vogel, Dietrich Stiller and Noemi Dacanay.

Under the March 15 resolution, Dela Cruz granted a motion from lawyer Jose Bernas appealing the DOJ's earlier decision to dismiss the case against Piatco and Fraport.

Bernas argued that the DOJ should not have decided to use the "control test" instead of the "grandfather rule" in deciding that Piatco did not violate the Anti-Dummy Law.

Under the control test, if the corporate stockholder of a company is at least 60-percent Filipino-owned, its holdings in a company are also considered Filipino-owned.

Under the grandfather rule, the determination of how much of the ownership of a company is Filipino or foreign takes into account the nationality of the shareholders in the corporation that own shares in another corporation.

'Control test'

In its earlier decision, the DOJ used the control test, citing a Securities and Exchange Commission opinion and the Foreign Investments Act that indicated that the control test was the operative method.

Bernas argued that the law and the SEC opinion did not expressly cite the control test as the one that must be used. He said there has been no Supreme Court decision stating that the grandfather rule was no longer the standard provided by law in determining the nationality of a corporation for purposes of criminal prosecution.

Furthermore, the administrative interpretation of the law was merely "persuasive," the courts being ultimately the final determinant of what the law means, Bernas said.

Piatco claimed to be 60-percent owned by the Chinese-Filipino Cheng family, 30 percent by Fraport and 10 percent by the Nissho Iway Corp. of Japan.

But, in the anti-dummy law case that it filed against Piatco and Fraport officials, the government alleged that through a fraudulent scheme of corporate layering, Fraport actually owned 61 percent of Piatco.

Leila B. Salaverria

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Pool champ faces child abuse charge

Alcano denies 3 incidents he molested 14-year-old daughter

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE 14-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER OF world pool champion Ronato "Volcano" Alcano yesterday formally charged him with child abuse in the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office.

The girl, accompanied by her mother, said in her complaint that her father sexually assaulted her on three occasions in his home on Oxford Street, Cubao, Quezon City late last year.

She identified herself as the only legitimate child of Ronato and her mother. The couple had separated when she was just a child, she said. The girl attached her birth certificate and her parents' marriage certificate to her complaint.

According to the teenager, the first two incidents of sexual assault happened on Nov. 25, 2006, while she was staying at her father's house with his live-in partner. She said that she was in the couple's room when Alcano allegedly touched her private parts..

The third incident, according to the girl, occurred last December while they were lying in bed with her father's live-in partner.

"I told my mother, who was then working in Dubai, about the incident. She came home last Jan. 4," she said in Filipino.

She added that she and her mother immediately went to the Philippine National Police Women's Crisis and Child Protection Center where the 14-year-old underwent a medico-legal examination. Chief Insp. Jaime Rodrigo Letrero Leal, medico-legal officer, indicated in the certificate that the victim showed signs of "sexual abuse."

The girl disclosed in her complaint that she had stopped going to school because of her traumatic experience.

"My life was destroyed because of what my father has done to me. I am so depressed and afraid," she said.

Alcano, a double world pool champion (9-ball and 8-ball), earlier denied his daughter's accusations in an interview with the INQUIRER.

Perry Mariano, his manager and benefactor, backed up Alcano, saying the girl was probably being used by people interested in his money.

Mariano added that the teenager even tried to borrow P100,000 from him, unknown to Alcano who, he said, earlier gave the girl money of the same amount.

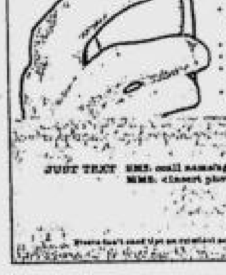
In November 2006, Alcano won the World 9-ball crown in Manila. In February this year, he signed a P1-million contract to endorse Guinness Beer, the new title sponsor of the Asian 9-ball tour which will kick off on April 20 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

At the same time, he signed a one-year contract with San Miguel Corp.

Last Monday, Alcano posted a 9-6 victory over Roel Esquillo in one of the inaugural matches of the 2nd BSCP National Pool Championships at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Manila.

METRO

Citizen's Call



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- Is there an everyday role model in your neighborhood?
- Delightful/dreadful finds on your way to work?

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[illegible]

Hold departure order issued vs Gonzalez

By Tina G. Santos

LUIS MANUEL "LOUIE" GONZALEZ, who was implicated in the killing of his stepbrother, Federico "Rico" Chuidian Delgado, can't leave the country for now.

Bureau of Investigation Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. has issued a hold departure order (HDO) against Gonzalez, 47, upon the orders of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

In his directive to Fernandez last March 22, the justice secretary said the HDO was necessary "so as not to frustrate the ends of justice and in view of the urgency of the matter."

Louie Gonzalez is the prime suspect in the killing of Delgado on March 10. Last week, Chief Insp. Alex Yanquiling, the head of the Manila Police District's homicide division, filed murder and frustrated murder charges against Gonzalez and his driver, Antonio Buenaflor, in the city prosecutor's office.

Delgado, son of shipping magnate Francisco "Paco" Delgado, was found dead in his apartment at the family-owned Mayflower Building on Leon Guinto Street in Malate, Manila.

HOLD/ A23

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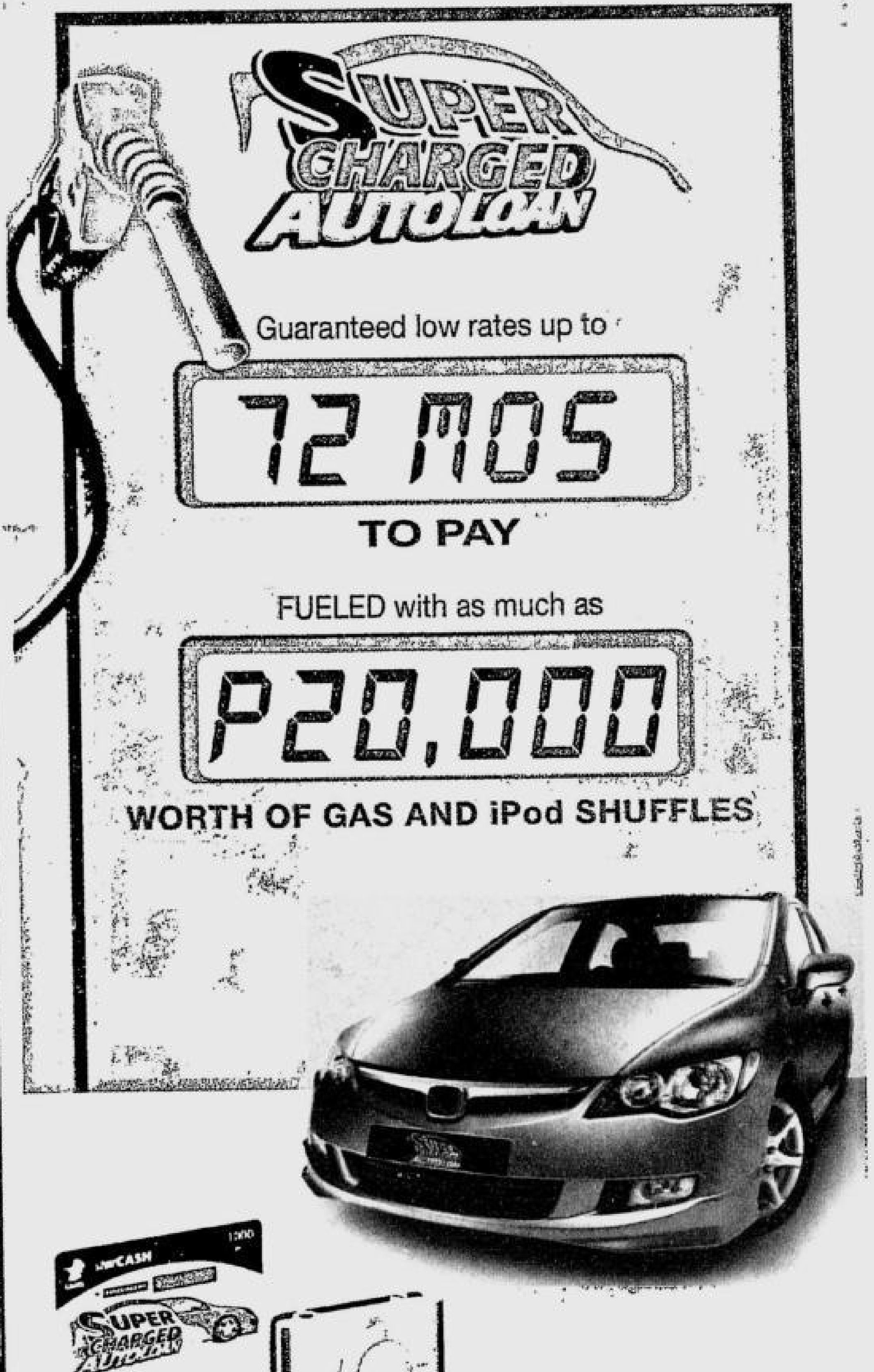

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More cops on church watch during Holy Week

INQUIRER "partner": Well-covered RYAN LIM

By Alcuin Papa

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE WILL deploy more men to churches in Metro Manila and other parts of the country as part of its security preparations for Holy Week.

"There will be more policemen in churches, chapels and other places of worship," PNP Directorate for Operations chief Wilfredo Garcia said in a press conference in Camp Crame yesterday.

Other "areas of convergence" like bus terminals, seaports and airports in major urban centers which are expected to be crowded for the Easter exodus to the provinces and tourist spots will also be under tight watch.

Garcia said the security plans are in line with the PNP's "Oplan Semana Santa."

He noted that in 1980, a bomb exploded in a Catholic church on Good Friday. In 2005, authorities seized sacks of explosives from an apartment in Quezon City allegedly rented by suspected terrorists on Holy Wednesday. The raid is believed to have thwarted plans to stage bombing attacks.

Region III police director, Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan, said he has dispatched "tourist policemen" to Pampanga where tourists gather during Holy Week to watch penitents who reenact Christ's crucifixion.

Chief Supt. Felizardo Serapio, Region XII police chief, said he has already deployed additional policemen to vital areas in the region which has been a frequent target of bombing attacks.

This year's Palarong Pambansa will be held in the region next month.

Earlier, PNP chief Director General Oscar Calderon ordered his officials to beef up security and public safety plans to ensure a peaceful observance of Holy Week.

Calderon also reminded his commanders that the New People's Army might take advantage of the occasion to launch attacks on police stations and other government installations.

"We have to intensify our security activities because we cannot let this happen," he said.

The PNP chief also directed his men to implement "Bantay Lakbay 2007" which would provide assistance to travelers bound for the provinces.

Garcia, meanwhile, reminded people who are going out of town to make sure that their houses are locked and that all appliances have been turned off.

In case of emergency, he reminded the public to call the PNP Patrol 117 hotline or TXT PNP 2920 for an immediate response.

Tender, loving care for Inquirer newsboys

By Allison W. Lopez

PROTECTION NOT ONLY FROM the elements, but from accidents and disease.

A total of 476 newsboys scattered all over Metro Manila will be getting these fringe benefits from the INQUIRER, apart from vests, a pair of shorts and fisherman's hats they have received as a bonus—all in the INQUIRER's signature navy blue color.

The added benefits include P50,000 in accident insurance and twice-a-year health checkups.

For newsboys Johnny Agao and Raul Badrina, the insurance and health care benefits will not only benefit them but also their loved ones.

"*Pinakamalaking bagay sa amin yung insurance, pero okay din yung sa health kasi nalalanghap namin lahat ng usok* (The insurance means a lot to us, but the checkups are also good since we inhale a lot of smoke at work)," Agao said.

Badrina agreed, saying both would be a "big help" to them.

The additional benefits for the newsboys are in line with INQUIRER's Project In-vest which was launched on March 19 and 20. The newspaper was the first to offer a more comprehensive support program to its partners on the streets.

With the constant threat of smog and speeding vehicles, INQUIRER circulation area manager Edwin Sacramed said they realized they should place more importance on the newsboys' health.

"We also want them to feel they are really our partners in this business," he added.

Asked how else the INQUIRER could assist them, Badrina and Agao replied scholarships for their children would be "a good thing."

Sacramed, added that there were more "surprises" in store for their "partners."

"We're always open to your ideas," he told the newsboys. "Just let us know what you need."

Dismantling of NLEX billboards to push through

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SOME OF THE OWNERS OF BILLBOARDS on the 88-km stretch of the North Luzon Expressway have threatened to sue the Department of Public Works and Highways if it makes good on its threat to take down the structures.

However, National Building Code Development Office Director Emmanuel Cuntapay said this will not stop the department from pushing through with its earlier threat of tearing down the billboards on the expressway. "We will proceed with the demolition on Friday," he told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Cuntapay said most of the replies they received from these owners contained threats of a lawsuit.

The billboard owners told the DPWH that there were no specific laws that provided for the demolition of the structures, he added.

Last week, the department inspected the over 130 billboards on the expressway and discovered that all were erected in violation of the law.

It promptly notified the owners that if they fail to take down the billboards, the DPWH would be forced to tear down the structures.

But Cuntapay added that this is not an enjoyable task. Dismantling a giant billboard could cost the government nearly P80,000 in fuel, equipment and manpower expenses.

DPWH legal officer Juan Talion Jr. earlier said that the billboards on the NLEX violated special laws, including provisions in the National Building Code.

DID YOU KNOW

METRO Manila was the top destination of domestic visitors from April to September 2005, based on the Household Survey on Domestic Visitors conducted by the National Statistics Office and the Department of Tourism. About 23.7 million Filipinos aged 15 and above traveled around the country in the said period. They visited 46.3 million different places in the Philippines, 21.3 percent of which (9.9 million) were in Metro Manila. The next top destinations were Cavite and Batangas.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Quiapo book showcases grandeur of old district

By Tina G. Santos

EVER WONDER HOW QUIAPO LOOKED like before sidewalk vendors invaded the area?

Read this book and take a walk back in time.

"Quiapo: Heart of Manila" documents Quiapo's history, its *esteros*, monuments, houses, paintings, sculptures, shrines, among others, said Fernando Nakpil Zialcita, grandson of Gregoria de Jesus and Julio Nakpil who used to live in the house built in 1914, now known as Bahay Nakpil-Bautista.

Zialcita, who spent part of his childhood in Quiapo, said the book, which was formally launched on March 24, hopes to contribute to the cause of heritage preservation and promotion by highlighting, inventorying, analyzing and interpreting the area's many traditions.

"We hope the government, businessmen, the schools, and the public will realize that Quiapo's multifaceted heritage is a major asset that should be everyone's concern," he said.

Zialcita added that the book also examines efforts at restoring Manila's grandeur and the possible incentives for preserving and using heritage houses.

In the book's preface, he said that he and the other "Quiapo lovers" chose to document and promote the district's heritage because "it is compelling as an ensemble," citing its outstanding landmarks.

According to him, Quiapo, a prime commercial center, clusters four major landmarks into one compact area. These are: Quiapo Basilica, which houses the well-loved Black Nazarene; the neo-gothic San Sebastian Church, one of the few churches in the world made of steel; the so-called Pagoda, which was commissioned by Jose Ocampo for his garden; and the Golden Mosque, which serves as a place of worship for Muslims.

Since the 1990s, Zialcita, along with friends, had been taking people on tours of the district. Many of those who worked on the book had explored its streets on foot. "They, too, were intrigued by the diversity and dynamism that is Quiapo," he said.

The book is a joint venture of scholars from the Ateneo de Manila University, the University of the Philippines, the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Manila city government and other groups working for the preservation of the area's cultural heritage.

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Martinez slay suspect was 'fall guy,' says judge

SEN. ALFREDO Lim congratulates Felizardo after dismissal of murder charge. REM ZAMORA

By Allison W. Lopez

A BARBECUE VENDOR ACCUSED of killing a police official in 2004 was set free yesterday after a judge ruled that he was just a "fall guy."

Judge Zenaida Daguna of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 19 dismissed the murder and frustrated murder charges filed against June Felizardo after the witness presented by the prosecutor said he had been forced by the police to implicate the accused.

Felizardo was arrested in his house in Caloocan City by Manila policemen on Oct. 20, 2004 two days after Supt. Manolo Martinez, Sta. Mesa police station chief, was gunned down by unidentified men as he was parking his car near the station.

Two other policemen, PO1 Conrad Cecillano and Jeanette Chan, were also wounded in the attack.

"The authorities immediately planned the arrest of June Felizardo without even bothering to procure a warrant of arrest," the judge said.

According to the preliminary investigation conducted by the police after Felizardo's arrest, witness Francis Abuyuan narrated that on Oct. 16, two days before Martinez was shot dead, Felizardo asked for help to carry out a plan to kill the police official.

Abuyuan, however, said he turned down the offer.

The police later claimed that Abuyuan called up Patrol 117 a day after Martinez was killed. He was even presented to Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, who had ordered the city police to arrest the official's killers.

The witness also said that an artist's sketch of the suspect in the slay looked like Felizardo.

However, on March 17, 2005, Abuyuan surprised everyone when he retracted his statement. He said his real name was Jonathan Prestado and that Capt. Albert Juan of the Special Operations Group City Hall detachment had instructed him to identify himself as Francis Abuyuan.

He told the court that on Oct. 20, 2004, he was in the SOG unit when he saw the sketch and told Juan that it "looked like" his neighbor Felizardo. He added, however, that this was not possible because they had spent the day together.

Prestado said he was later summoned to the mayor's office so he could tell Atienza that he knew something about the killing. That same night, the police arrested Felizardo.

Prestado said the police had promised him that Felizardo would be released after signing a "fake document" and that he would be given part of the reward Mayor Atienza had offered for the arrest of Martinez's killers.

"They told me, '*Kesa ikaw naman ang mapasama sa amin, Magkakapera ka rin naman* (It would be preferable that you not get into trouble with us. You would also make some money, too)'," he told the court.

According to the judge, the threat and promise of a reward were two clear reasons why the witness signed the statement.

His recantation, the judge added, lent "greater credence to the theory that Felizardo was merely a fall guy."

Cops eye suicide angle in Belgian's death

By Kristine L. Alave

A BELGIAN IDENTIFIED AS Pierre Claude Bal, 52, was found dead in his house in San Mateo, Rizal yesterday morning, an incident that the police said was a case of suicide.

PO2 Wilmer Pribado, the officer investigating the case, said Bal's body was found by his maid, Noemi Bernad, at around 9 a.m. in his bedroom at his house on Tierra Monte Phase 4-A, Barangay Silangan, San Mateo, Rizal.

Pribado said Bal, whom witnesses described as clinically depressed and an alcoholic, was last seen alive at about 10 p.m. Monday night, when he got home after spending time at a beerhouse. Investigators have yet to ascertain the time of his death.

The investigator said Bal tied a wire around his neck and fastened it to a bedpost. "Based on our investigation, it was a suicide," Pribado added.

The victim, according to the police, had been living in San Mateo for seven years with his live-in partner, Wilma Estaquio, a Filipino, and her son. When Wilma later went to work in England, she would often send money to Bal and her son, Pribado said.

But when she heard that her partner was squandering the money on alcohol, she stopped sending money to him, the police said. Bal used to own bars in the province but these did not prosper and he had accumulated huge debts, Pribado added.

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ANOTHER ARROYO
Jing Arroyo (left), who is running for congressman in the 2nd District of Parañaque City, filed his certificate of candidacy last week at the Commission on Elections office in Intramuros, Manila. Beside him are Comelec NCR Director Michael Dioneda and lawyer Larry Sanchez. Arroyo, who is running as an independent, said he is running on a platform that would focus on computer literacy. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hold departure order …

From page A21

His companion, Analiza Pesico, told police that two men attacked her and Delgado when they came home at 10:30 p.m. She said the suspects beat her and tied her up, but she was able to escape and report the incident to the police.

The suspect and the victim are stepbrothers because Gonzalez's mother, Vicky Quirino, married Francisco Delgado, Rico's father.

The suspect's sister, Maria Rosario G. Meyer, and his estranged wife, singer Kuh Ledesma, earlier said Gonzalez was not capable of killing anyone.

His psychiatrist, Dr. Jon Edward Jurilla, also said it was "highly unlikely" that his patient could have escaped the day his stepbrother was killed.

"He was a shabu addict but he was in rehab (at the Makati Medical Center) at the time of the killing," Jurilla said earlier. He added that his patient tested positive for methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu).

Jurilla corroborated earlier statements made by Gonzalez's lawyer, Perry Pe. The doctor said his patient was first brought to the Asian Hospital on March 7 then moved to MMC's psychiatric unit the same night. He was confined there until March 18, he added.

Jurilla also claimed he saw Gonzalez at the MMC on the afternoon of March 10, the day Delgado was killed.

METROBRIEFS

Man kills self over case

A CALL CENTER agent, who was reportedly depressed over a homicide case he was facing, killed himself Monday night in Quezon City. Jose Joffrey Tan, 23, shot himself in the head inside his bedroom at his house on Regalado Avenue corner Coronet Street in Barangay West Fairview. SPO1 Rodrigo Barrameda of the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation Unit said that according to the victim's uncle, Tan had been worried over the filing of a homicide case against him. Police said they found a caliber .22 revolver near the victim's body but made no mention of a suicide note.

Jeannette I. Andrade

PWU graduation rites

THE PHILIPPINE Women's University will hold its 84th baccalaureate ceremonies on March 30, 4 p.m., at the Bayanihan Paseo, Manila-Taft campus. Rev. Broderick Pabillo, auxiliary bishop of Manila, will celebrate Mass with chaplains Msgr. Hernando Coronel and Fr. Saturnino Pilotos Jr. as cocelebrants. This year's graduates will be inducted into the PWU Alumni Association by its president, Olivia Villafuerte. Closing the ceremony is the singing of the University Hymn with Dean Harold Galang conducting. Overall chair of this year's ceremonies committee is Dean Dr. Liwayway Dapito, with Dr. Ligaya Branganza as cochair.

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Sweeping climate changes seen by 2100, says study

CHICAGO—MANY OF THE world's climate zones will vanish entirely by 2100, or be replaced by new, previously unseen ones, if global warming continues as expected, a study released Monday said.

Rising temperatures will force existing climate zones toward higher latitudes and higher elevations, squeezing out climates at the colder extremes, and leaving room for unfamiliar climes around the equator, the study predicted.

The sweeping climatic changes will likely affect huge swaths of land from the Indonesian rainforest to the Peruvian Andes, including many known hotspots of diversity, disrupting local ecological systems and populations.

"Our findings are a logical outcome of global warming scenarios that are driven by continued emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases," said Jack Williams, a professor of geography at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and author of the paper.

"The warmest areas get warmer and move outside our current range of experience and the colder areas also get warmer and so those climates disappear."

Williams and colleagues from the University of Wyoming based their predictions on computer models that translate carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions into climate change. The emissions' estimates were taken from a report issued by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in February.

The models suggest that the climate zones covering as much as 48 percent of the earth's landmass could disappear by 2100.

By that point, close to 40 percent of the world's land surface area would also have a "novel" or new climate, according to the climate models.

Even if emission rates slowed due to mitigation strategies, the changes would still affect up to 20 percent of the earth's landmass in each scenario, the authors said.

As a geographic phenomenon, the disappearing climates would likely affect tropical highlands and regions near the poles including the Colombian and Peruvian Andes, Central America, African Rift Mountains, the Zambian and Angolan Highlands.

The trend poses the greatest threat to areas of rich, but threatened, animal and plant life, in regions such as the Himalayas, the Philippines and African and South American mountain ranges. The changes could threaten some species with extinction and also displace or fragment local human populations.

As for new or novel climate zones, the phenomenon will largely affect the tropics or sub-tropics, such as the Amazonian and Indonesian rainforests, where even subtle temperature variations can have far-reaching effects, Williams said. *AFP*

A POLAR bear sow and two cubs are seen on the Beaufort Sea coast within the 1002 Area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in this undated handout photo provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service Alaska Image Library. Researchers warn animals such as polar bears face risk of extinction by 2100 as climate zones change. REUTERS

N. Korea banking row to end in days, says US envoy

WASHINGTON—A BANKING dispute that stalled North Korean nuclear disarmament talks could be resolved in a couple of days despite complex technical problems, the chief US envoy to the negotiations said Monday.

The US Treasury is working with Beijing to transfer $25 million frozen in 2005 in Macau's Banco Delta Asia, which the United States suspects are North Korea's proceeds from counterfeiting and money laundering.

Christopher Hill, the top US envoy to the six-party nuclear talks, said that, based on his discussions with a senior US Treasury official in Beijing, the dispute could end this week, paving the way for North Korea to shut down its main nuclear reactor and allow back into the country UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors.

"As we get through this banking issue—I believe we will in the next couple of days—North Korea will have further discussions with the IAEA and by early part of April—certainly by the first half of April—we will have the reactor shut down, sealed and we will have international inspectors back," Hill told a Washington forum.

Pyongyang has agreed to admit IAEA inspectors as part of an agreement by the United States, Russia, China, the two Koreas and Japan on Feb. 13 setting a timetable for the North to begin disarming.

The US effectively blacklisted the Macau bank on suspicion it was handling the proceeds of North Korean counterfeiting and money-laundering, but Washington cleared the way for the release of the funds as part of the nuclear accord.

However the fund's designated recipient, state-owned Bank of China, has allegedly refused to accept the money for fear the transaction may hurt its credit rating.

The latest round of six-party disarmament talks ended abruptly in Beijing last Thursday after Pyongyang refused to negotiate until it received the cash.

Daniel Glaser, the US Treasury's deputy assistant secretary for terrorist financing and financial crimes, flew to Beijing at the weekend and held talks with officials from China's foreign ministry, the central bank and the country's banking industry regulator in a bid to break the financial impasse.

"I have talked to him (Glaser), he is working very hard but it is a difficult process and there are a lot of technical problems which were unforeseen by everybody, including me," Hill told reporters after the forum.

"But we want to get it done so that the North Koreans will have no excuse" but to shut down the Yongbyon reactor by the middle of April as scheduled. *AFP*

4 generals faulted in Tillman's death

WASHINGTON—A PENTAGON watchdog on Monday found fault with four generals and five other officers for mistakes following the death of US Army Ranger and former professional football star Pat Tillman in Afghanistan.

Army investigators found that Tillman, widely lauded as a hero for giving up the National Football League to join the Army, was killed by fellow US soldiers who believed they were engaging enemy fighters on April 22, 2004.

The Army initially told Tillman's family he died from enemy fire and did not alter that account until a month later, even though officers quickly knew that he was likely killed by US troops, the Pentagon's acting inspector general said.

Only after a nationally televised memorial service and the posthumous award of a Silver Star, one of the US military's top awards for gallantry, did Army officials notify his family that he had died from US fire, the watchdog said.

"We as an Army failed in our duty to the Tillman family," Acting Army Secretary Pete Geren told reporters. "We failed to live up to Army values." The inspector general, Thomas Gimble, also found three previous investigations into the death were deficient and that information presented in support of the Silver Star was incorrect and should not have been provided to top officials.

Geren said the Silver Star would stand but the accompanying citation would be changed to reflect the true circumstances of Tillman's death.

Tillman is the best known of any American service member killed in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. He walked away from a $3.6 million football contract to join the military along with his brother, a fellow Ranger, in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks.

A statement issued by Tillman's family said a Pentagon briefing they received was "unsatisfactory" and that they planned to seek a congressional investigation. *Reuters*

'World's biggest dragon'

BEIJING—INVESTORS IN A central China city are building a giant $300 million sculpture of a dragon that they say will be the largest in the world, state media said on Tuesday.

The "Ancestral Dragon," whose partially completed head rises 9 meters above ground in Henan province, will be finished by 2009 to mark the 60th anniversary of the People's Republic's founding, the Beijing Morning Post said.

The investor group based in the nearby provincial capital of Zhengzhou said the 21-kilometer metal structure is intended as a tourist destination that will wind its way along a circular group of hills north of the city.

It will house galleries in which visitors can, for a fee, have their names and other messages inscribed. Advertising space on the giant serpent also will be sold, the paper said.

An overseas Chinese investor group initially began the project in 2002 but abandoned it due to financial difficulties.

The new group are also having money troubles and seeking funds from other parties, adding that the dragon could act as a barrier protecting Zhengzhou from sandstorms that blow in from the north each spring, the paper said.

The length of the dragon was selected to represent the 21st century, the paper said. *AFP*

Tough rehab for China's Internet addicts

A CHINESE psychiatrist prepares a teenager, one of the more serious cases, for treatment with low-voltage electrical jolts via pins inserted into the skin according to the prescriptions of traditional Chinese medicine, at the Internet Addiction Treatment Center in the southeastern suburb of Daxing in Beijing. AFP

BEIJING—KNEES SHAKING, Chen Cheng explains why his parents have sent him to a clinic for Internet addicts.

The 17-year-old high school student was a superman in cyberspace—once spending three days and nights playing online games, uninterrupted by meals or sleep.

But he paid the price offline.

"I had no sense of achievement from anything I did in the physical world," the bespectacled youth said.

Here at the Internet Addiction Treatment Center in Beijing's southeastern suburb of Daxing, Chen is put through a strict regimen that might as well be boot camp—and for good reason, since this is an Army-run clinic inside a military district.

The 20-odd teenagers at the center, all placed here involuntarily by their families, get up at 6:30 a.m. for long days of physical training and team sports, mixed with quiet therapy sessions with psychiatrists.

In one room inside the bleak barracks-style building, more serious cases are treated with low-voltage electrical jolts via pins inserted into the skin according to the prescriptions of traditional Chinese medicine.

"Not everyone has to do this, but we suggest it for patients who have serious problems with sleep," said Wang Yanbin, a doctor who was carefully monitoring that the electrical current does not exceed safe levels.

"We apply this three to five times over a 10-day period, and the results are usually very good."

The primary purpose of it all: To isolate the patients from the Internet, which so far has been an overwhelming influence on their lives.

The secondary purpose: To teach them there is a life beyond cyberspace.

Life in another world

"Some of the kids here live in another world. They assume the role of kings or wizards. To use a Western expression, their soul has left for the other side," said Tao Ran, the center's founder and director.

The center seeks to remedy this through a direct encounter with the physical world. The students do their own laundry. They play with toy guns, and paint with brushes.

The center is one of an estimated 30 clinics scattered across China that have been set up to deal with Internet addiction, a growing problem in a country with 137 million online users.

The price for a monthlong stay at the Beijing center is nearly 10,000 yuan ($1,300), or a year's salary for many Chinese. Only a tiny minority can send their children for treatment here.

But Tao estimated China has altogether 2.5 million Internet addicts, overwhelmingly young, male and attracted to online games. He considers it a troubling problem.

"The violence and sex of the games is likely to have a very deep influence on them. And it's having this impact during the years that the personality is formed," he said.

"Close to 40 percent of the kids here show violent behavior. They may start fighting over trifles." *AFP*

Aussie pleads guilty to supporting terror at US tribunal

GUANTANAMO BAY—AUSTRALIAN David Hicks pleaded guilty to a charge of supporting terrorism before a US military tribunal in Guantanamo Bay on Monday, five years after he was detained in Afghanistan.

Looking somber with his hands clasped in front of him, Hicks, 31, stood beside his military lawyer who told the judge his client would not contest the charge of providing "material support for terrorism."

Dressed in khaki prison garb and sporting chest-length hair, Hicks was escorted by two stocky unarmed soldiers who allowed him to sit with his lawyers without shackles or handcuffs.

The plea came a day after defense lawyers said Hicks was weighing a possible plea deal that could get him out of the US Navy prison for "war on terror" detainees.

The chief prosecutor for the tribunals had said previously that a 20-year sentence would be a "reasonable" punishment for Hicks. It was not immediately clear if US military authorities would take into account his five years served at the Guantanamo prison.

Hicks was captured in 2001 by the US-backed Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, and handed over to the United States, which eventually transferred him to Guantanamo, on Cuba's southeastern tip.

The plea, entered at a hastily arranged hearing late Monday, followed a three-hour hearing, which was supposed to clear the way for a trial against Hicks before a special US military tribunal.

Hicks was the first detainee to be charged before the new tribunals, which were reconstituted under a new law after a previous tribunal system was tossed out by the US Supreme Court last year.

Hicks was accused of training at al-Qaida's camp in Kandahar, southern Afghanistan and allegedly volunteering to fight alongside Taliban forces during the US-led invasion.

The charge sheet does not allege Hicks attacked a US target, but says he conducted surveillance on the derelict US embassy in Kabul and met Osama bin Laden as well as accused "shoe bomber" Richard Reid.

The Hicks case has became a major political issue in Australia, with the conservative government lobbying Washington to expedite the case.

Defense lawyers had said the Australian government had pushed much harder on the case in the past year after being accused of failing to intervene to protect one of its citizens.

One of his lawyers, Australian David McLeod, had said on Sunday that years of detention had taken a toll on his client and that a plea deal might be attractive.

"He's had a pretty rough trod over three to five years. And if it was yourself, I suspect you would be thinking about how to get out of this place," said McLeod. *AFP*

Britain, Iran in standoff over 15 seized sailors

TEHRAN—NEW DETAILS EMERGED Tuesday of the incident that led Iran to seize and question 15 British sailors and marines who it contends entered Iranian waters illegally, even as Britain and Iran continued to dispute where the group was at the time.

Iran said it is interviewing the 15 to determine if their alleged entry into Iranian waters on Friday was "intentional or unintentional" before deciding what to do with them—a tentative sign it could be seeking a way out of the standoff.

Britain insists they were in Iraqi waters after searching a civilian cargo vessel, but Iran says it has proof they were in Iranian territory.

Britain's Defense Ministry said they were seized in the Shatt al-Arab, a waterway flowing into the Persian Gulf that marks the border between Iran and Iraq. But the exact path of the dividing line in the waterway has long been disputed, in part because of shifting sands and mud in the waterway's extensive delta as it empties into the Persian Gulf.

A British reporter embedded with the Royal Navy reported in The Independent newspaper that the incident began when the sailors and marines approached a Japanese merchant ship suspected of smuggling second-hand cars into Iraq without paying tax.

That could not be immediately confirmed with US, Iraqi or British officials.

Iran's emphasis on the detainees' intent raised the possibility the British might be released without trial if Tehran determines they strayed across the border by accident. On Saturday, Iran's military chief, Gen. Ali Reza Afshar had said the 15 confessed to "aggression into the Islamic Republic of Iran's waters."

Other Iranian officials suggested afterward that the Britons might be charged with a crime—presumably espionage or trespassing—for knowingly entering Iran's territorial waters.

Deputy Foreign Minister Mehzi Mostafavi took a softer line Monday while saying that the 14 men and one woman were still being interrogated.

"It should become clear whether their entry was intentional or unintentional. After that is clarified, the necessary decision will be made," Mostafavi said.

Iran has refused to say where the captured Britons were being held or to allow British officials to speak with them, but assured the British ambassador to Tehran, Geoffrey Adams, that they were in good health.

Iranian officials also have told the British that British diplomats can see the service members after the investigation is concluded, the official Iranian news agency has reported.

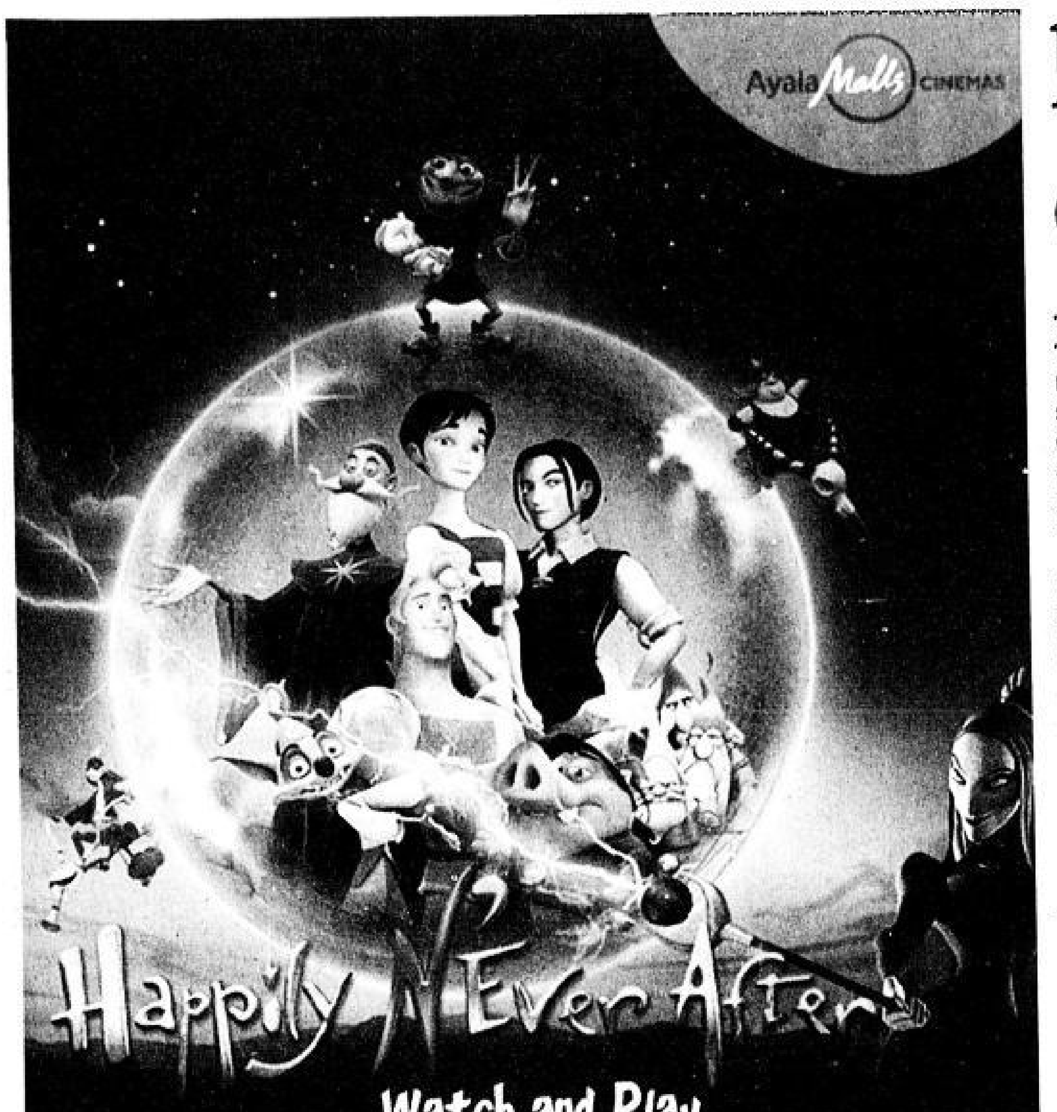
British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett called Monday for Iran to allow access to the captives. "We're pressing the Iranian government at a variety of levels to give us details of where our personnel are being held," she said.

In London, Iranian Ambassador Rasoul Movahedian was summoned to the British Foreign Office for the third time since the standoff began.

There were fears in Britain that the fate of the 15 could get caught up in the political tensions between Tehran and the West, including the dispute over Iran's nuclear program and accusations of Iranian help to Shiite militants in Iraq.

In particular, there were worries Iran might seek to use the prisoners as leverage in trying to get the US to free at least five Iranians detained in Iraq for allegedly being part of a Revolutionary Guard force.

Mostafavi denied Iran was seeking a trade, but there were calls from elsewhere within Iran's leadership for the government to hold out for a swap. *AP*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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Northern Ireland rivals ink power-sharing deal

BELFAST—NORTHERN IRELAND'S MAIN Protestant and Catholic parties agreed on Monday to start sharing power on May 8 after their leaders put aside decades of hostility to hold a historic first meeting.

Hardline Protestant cleric Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), sat side-by-side with Gerry Adams, head of the mainly Catholic Sinn Fein, to announce the ground-breaking deal to govern the British province.

"We must not allow our justified loathing of the horrors and tragedies of the past to become a barrier to creating a better and more stable future for our children," Paisley said after the meeting at Belfast's imposing assembly building.

Britain and Ireland have pushed Northern Ireland's feuding parties for years to agree to share power, seeing it as a crucial step towards cementing peace in the province of 1.6 million people that has been torn by years of violence.

Adams said that after centuries of conflict and hurt "now there is a new start, with the help of God." The meeting brought together Paisley, the 80-year-old cleric famous since the 1960s as an outspoken defender of Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom and the 58-year-old Adams, once hunted by the British army as a guerrilla suspect.

Paisley has always refused to talk to Adams because of Sinn Fein's alliance with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) guerrilla group which was responsible for nearly half of the 3,600 killings during 30 years of sectarian conflict.

But on Monday, both men sat within a few feet of each other around a table. There was no public handshake.

Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Hain said the meeting was "a graphic manifestation of the power of politics over bigotry, bitterness and horror." The power-sharing government will run Northern Ireland's day-to-day affairs but London will retain sovereignty over the province, which has a Protestant majority.

His popularity undermined by the Iraq war and political scandals, British Prime Minister Tony Blair was eager for a breakthrough in Northern Ireland to seal his peace-broking legacy before he steps down in a few months time.

The DUP wants to maintain Northern Ireland's links with Britain while Sinn Fein's ultimate aim is a united Ireland.

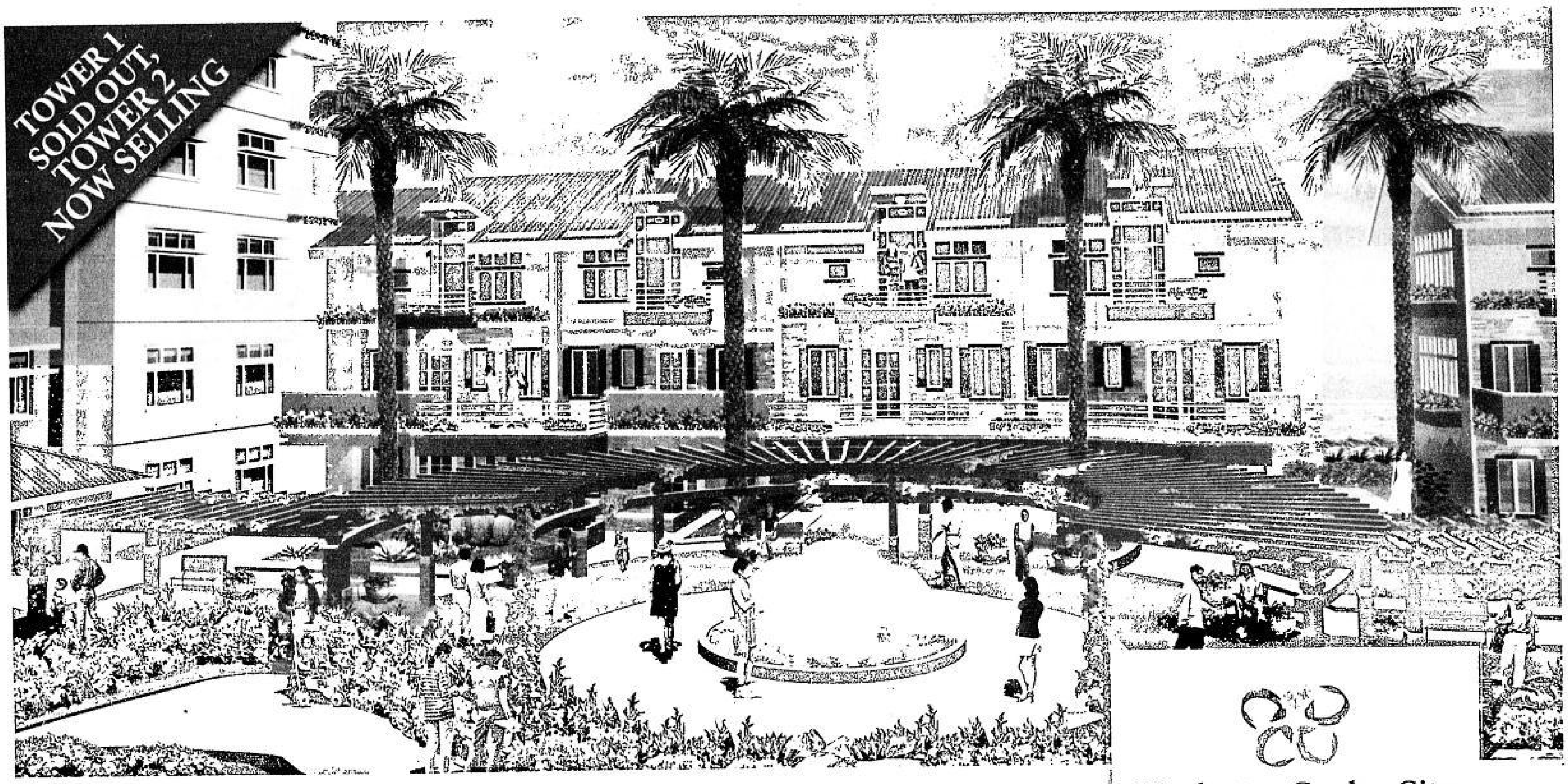
The British government had told both sides they must share power from Monday or accept indefinite direct rule from London.

But Paisley's DUP said on Saturday it wanted a delay until May.

Britain eagerly accepted a compromise that saw Catholics and Protestants come together to hammer out a deal among themselves.

The government will rush emergency legislation through the British parliament on Tuesday to prevent the Northern Ireland assembly being closed down, Hain said.

Reuters



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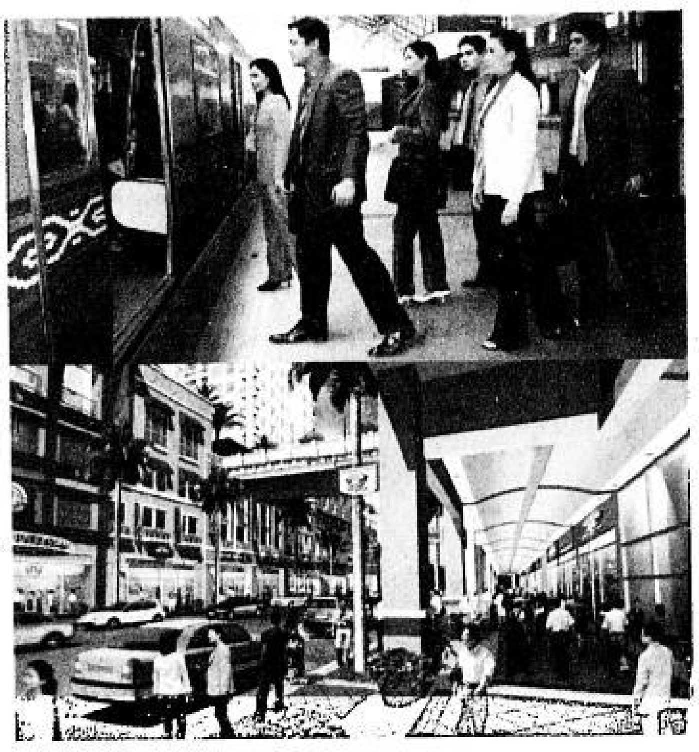

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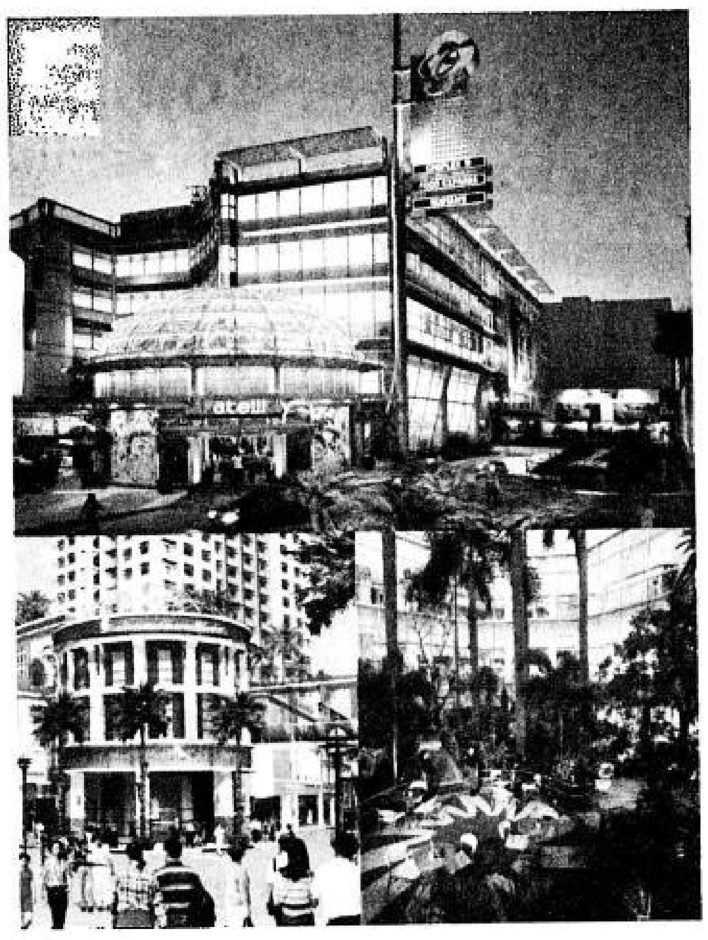

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■ Americans shatter world records /A31

Unknown bet upsets embattled Alcano

By Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

RONNIE ALCANO TRIED TO appear calm and composed, unmindful of the grave charges he is accused of by his very own daughter yesterday.

But when his match against unheralded Fidel Punzalan in the 2nd BSCP National Pool Championships got going, his shots betrayed him.

The reigning World Pool 9-ball and 8-ball champion, seemingly out of sync, yielded to Punzalan, 9-5, and fell into the loser's bracket of the tournament at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium that dangles P500,000 to the champion.

GRAVELY AFFECTED: Ronnie Alcano ERIK ARAZAS

"*Apektado talaga ako sa akusasyon ng aking anak* (I'm really affected by the accusation of my child," said Alcano.

Alcano's 14-year-old daughter accused her father on Monday of sexually molesting her three times. She filed child abuse charges against the pool genius from Calamba City at the Quezon City Regional Trial Court yesterday.

Relying mostly on instinct, Alcano gained a 5-4 advantage, but made an empty break in the 10th rack, allowing his rival to level the count at 5-all.

Punzalan then completed the upset win by taking four straight racks.

"I think Ronnie is affected by the problems he's now facing," said Punzalan in Filipino. "My victory may be a fluke."

"*Sabi ko kay boss Perry (Mariano) uuwi na ako,*

UNKNOWN/A28

LASCUÑA: 3 behind

Lascuña leads RP bidders with 69

SINGAPORE—TONY Lascuña, the lone Filipino survivor of this year's Asian Tour qualifier, shot a three-under-par 69 and stood three strokes off the pace at the start of the 36-hole British Open International qualifying on Tuesday.

The Asian Tour rookie gunned down five birdies against a double bogey and was the best scorer among six Filipinos at the Sentosa Golf Club seeking one of five slots at the world's oldest major.

Angelo Que and Artemio Murakami scored identical 70s, Frankie Miñoza carded a 72, Juvic Pagunsan had a 74 and Cookie La'O a 76.

Australia's Adam Groom and India's Rahil Gangjee showed the way with 66s.

"I am pleased with my performance today despite not being really consistent off the tee," said Lascuña.

The 36-year-old Filipino will be hoping to emulate his performance last year when he topped the 2006 Barclays Singapore Open qualifiers at the Tanjong Course.

"The last time I played here was during the 2006 Singapore Open qualifiers where I shot a six-under-par," he said.

Asian Tour News

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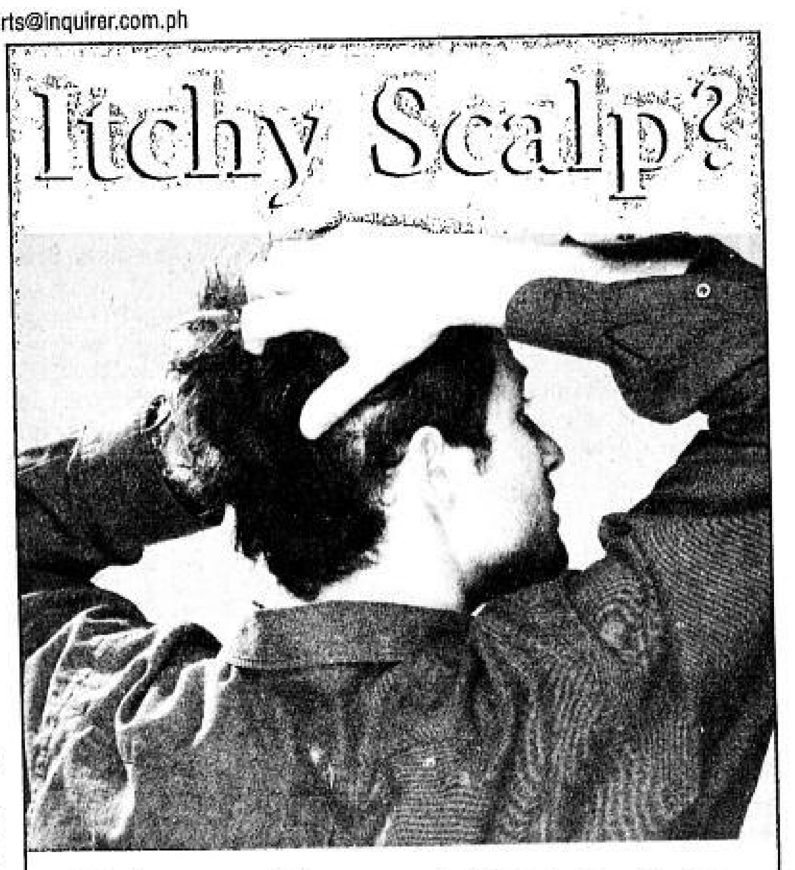

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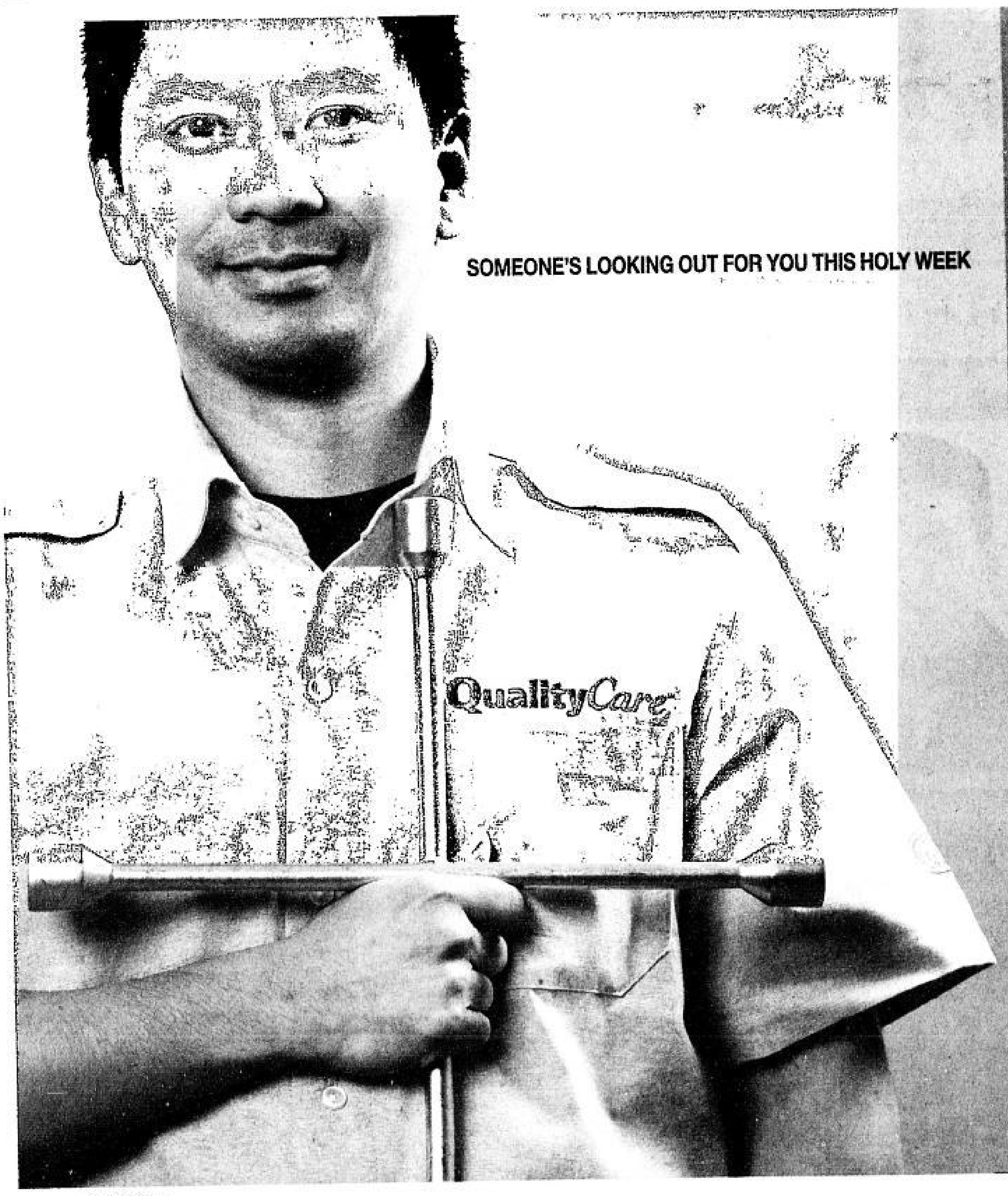

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Would Pacquiao feast on spoiled tortilla?

HE'S UNBEATEN IN 32 FIGHTS BUT what else do we know of Jorge Solis?

His father, no need to wonder, must be one tall, hard-working *paisano*.

But after a couple of no-shows in California last week, Señor Jorge's middle name should now be changed to Mystery.

Three weeks before his scheduled April 14 clash with Pinoy superhero Manny Pacquiao, the 5-foot-10 Solis has, so far, achieved one unusual feat.

He has kept everybody guessing.

* * *

Is this unbeaten Mexican boxer a gem or a junkie?

Is he a raw, hard diamond or plain jelly?

Of course, he never played hard to get. Solis did not blink, he did not think twice and promptly jumped at the chance to fight Pacquiao.

Here was a once-in-a-lifetime shot at affluence and instant immortality.

* * *

But while the whole world knows of Pacquiao's fierce, sharp fighting style, the best that fans could hope for is some toughness in Solis come fight time in Texas.

Let's all pray there would at least be a semblance of a fight.

Let's beseech the gods at Olympus to grant Solis extra strength and courage to withstand Pacquiao's expected onslaught.

This is not meant to belittle or demean Solis.

In fact, he would be in a rare position to do a Pacquiao, who in November 2003 shone and exploded like a hidden gem to upset and topple the great Marco Antonio Barrera right there at the Alamodome.

* * *

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

Unfortunately for Solis, Pacquiao this time did not opt to play hooky the way he had in preparing against three unheralded foes, namely Fahsan 3-K Battery (at the Fort in Taguig), Hector Velasquez at the Staples Center in Los Angeles) and Oscar Larios (at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City).

Pacquiao will not be perfect as he was in his last two knockout wins over Erik Morales.

But he will be in there no less than 90 per cent.

This, indeed, could already be too much for Solis, based on initial feeds about the limited capabilities of the unbeaten Mexican, who has been labeled as slow, awkward and predictable.

* * *

Not to play killjoy and send those who have gambled their riches on a great fight worried.

But an unassailable information, from a crafty Filipino fighter waiting to be named among the Philippines' all-time greats, bared Solis had no business being in the same ring with Pacquiao.

The unbeaten Mexican was likened to a spoiled dish (*panis*), an unacceptable tag for one aspiring to boxing greatness.

You see, Ernest Hemingway had introduced a native term, *salao*, which the American literary saint said was the worst form of unlucky.

Let's just hope the initial info on Solis was unfounded, and that the Mexican was not exactly a hopeless, luckless case.

Otherwise, Pacquiao, while honestly going after a picnic basket, could end up handling a spoiled dish.

* * *

(**AMAZING GRACE:** Imagine there were flowers from Shin Dong-pa and another Korean player in Jun Bernardino's wake at the Magallanes Chapels. That report came from jazz star Richard Merk, who called it amazing. Prayers please for the great Mr. Bernardino... Also for my dearest aunt, Francisca Leyva-Arcangel, widow of Melchor Arcangel, legendary leader from Mandaluyong City. Tiya Kikay lies in state at their residence on J. Rizal Street, Mandaluyong City. Interment will be on Sunday at the Mandaluyong Catholic Cemetery. Peace.)

Pacman weight perfect—Roach

FILIPINO SUPERSTAR MANNY Pacquiao is just six or seven pounds over the weight limit, and trainer Freddie Roach believes his prized protege is well within the ideal fighting weight.

Pacquiao will stake his WBC international super featherweight title against the unbeaten Jorge Solis on April 14 and, with still more than two weeks to go, Roach said his ward should easily make the limit of 130 lbs at the official weigh-in.

"Manny was 137 lbs, so weight will be no problem for him to make, as long as he stays away from the distractions," Roach said in an interview with Fightnews.com writer Brad Cooney.

"You know what? It seems Manny creates distractions, and he seems to like them, but he doesn't seem to get bothered by them in the ring, at least not yet."

Roach said Pacquiao will "do fine" against Solis.

"Anybody who decides to trade (punches) with Manny doesn't do very well, so we'll see what happens," added the trainer, who hinted that there is a chance he would be at Pacquiao's corner when the "Blaze of Glory" card is held at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

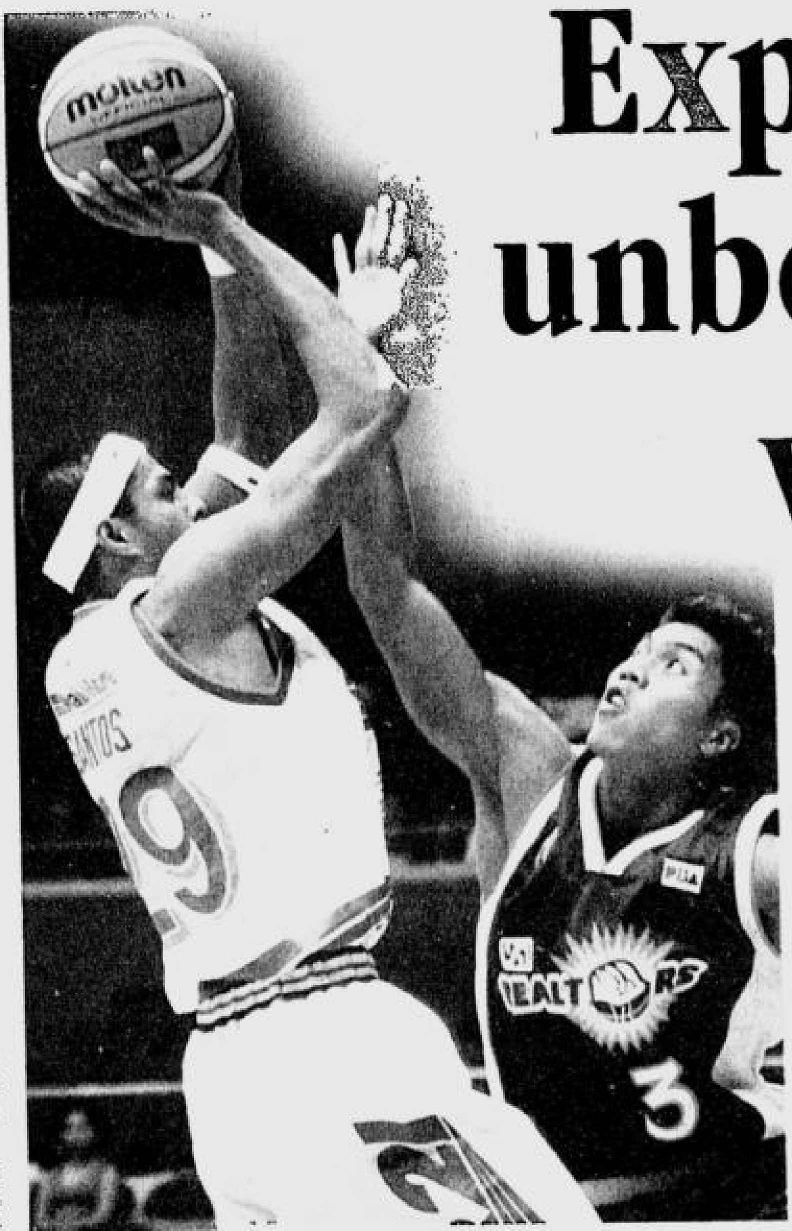
"I talked to Manny last night," said Roach. "Manny asked me if I could come to San Antonio to work his corner for the Solis fight. I told him that I would talk to Oscar (De La Hoya) about that tomorrow. I will only miss one day if I do, and I told Manny that I would do my best to be there."

Roach is currently in Puerto Rico, supervising the training of De La Hoya, who is gearing up for his titanic May 5 showdown with Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Meanwhile, promoter Bob Arum, in another Fightnews interview, has indicated that he is not entirely closing the doors to possibly co-promoting with GBP (Golden Boy Promotions of De La Hoya) in the future.

"I have been in this business for 40 years and for much of the time in the business my bitter enemy has been Don King, and look how many great fights Don and I have put on together because we are boxing people," he said. "We understand that we can fight (between ourselves) but if there is a chance to put a big fight, you cooperate and you put on the big fight.

"The problem with Golden Boy is that it is run by a Swiss banker who is not a boxing guy and he doesn't understand any of that stuff." *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*



AIR21'S Arwind Santos pops a shot off Nerbert Omolon of Sta. Lucia Realty in a recent game won by the Express. INQUIRER PHOTO/ERIK ARAZAS

Express stake unbeaten slate vs Red Bull

COMING OFF A VIRTUAL WORKOUT THE LAST TIME UP, RED BULL takes a crack today at an Air21 side that hasn't done anything wrong in the PBA Fiesta Cup eliminations at the Araneta Coliseum.

STANDINGS	W	L
Air21	4	0
Red Bull	4	1
Alaska	4	1
Ginebra	4	1
Coca-Cola	3	3
Talk 'N Text	2	2
Sta. Lucia	1	3
Welcoat	1	4
Purefoods	1	4
San Miguel	0	5

GAMES TODAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:35 p.m.—Red Bull vs Air21
7:20 p.m.—Purefoods vs Talk 'N Text

Game time is 4:35 p.m. with Red Bull, although a joint second in the standings, given the slight edge to prevail and inflict a first loss on the chug-chugging Express.

Air21 has come up with escape acts one after the other, displaying poise, maturity and firepower in a tournament bereft of its top stars who are playing for the national team.

Express guard Gary David has stepped up and made this tournament his playground, emerging as the only local to lead his team in scoring with close to 25 poins a night.

Air21 import Shawn Daniels, meanwhile, has contented himself playing behind the shadows, so to speak, and that has made the difference so far for the Express who are off to their best start in franchise history.

But against Red Bull, Daniels, who scored just eight points but grabbed 22 rebounds in the last Air21 win, might have to step up a little as David will obviously not be able to do it on his own.

James Penny was used sparingly in a blowout win over Sta. Lucia last week, seeing action for just over two quarters. That definitely is bad news for the Air21 coaching staff, who needs to take the center of Red Bull's game away from Penny.

"We thought it would be a tough battle, but Sta. Lucia just gave way," Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao said.

Meanwhile, Talk 'N Text guns for a second straight win against Purefoods and Marquin Chandler at 7:20 p.m.

The Phone Pals will be coming off a 100-78 victory over Welcoat on Saturday.

Chandler, on the other hand, has had a great return although he failed to prevent a Purefoods loss to Air21 when his teammates failed to deliver at the crunch.

Last year's Best Import hit 42 points against Air21, the signal, he said, that he is back in tip-top shape. And against the Phone Pals and JJ Sullinger, he will be a marked man.

Jun Limpot has been reactivated from injury bay for the Giants, who are short-handed since the start with Kerby Raymundo on national duty and Roger Yap and Marc Pingris out with injuries.

Sullinger is one of the better imports in the lot and can contribute when needed and entertain the crowd at the same time.

The left-hander had 20 points and 13 rebounds also in limited time against the Dragons. He also hit 4-of-8 from beyond the arc.

Meanwhile, the PBA is requesting the immediate relatives of Hall of Fame awardees, the late Delfin "Pinggoy" Pengson and former stars Danny Florencio and Abet Guidaben, to get in touch with Hazel Ancheta at the PBA office (tel. nos. 6381815 to 17 or at 0928-3952394). The awards rites will be on April 8. *Musong R. Castillo*

Unknown bet stuns Alcano in BSCP tilt

From page A27

hinahabol ako ng mga writer (I told boss Perry that I'm going home because the writers are chasing me)" added Alcano, who was advised not to talk to the media by his lawyer Vic Rodriguez.

Joining Alcano in the loser's bracket was US Bar Table double winner Warren Kiamco, who was stunned by Negros Billiard Stable's Godofredo Ducanes, 9-6.

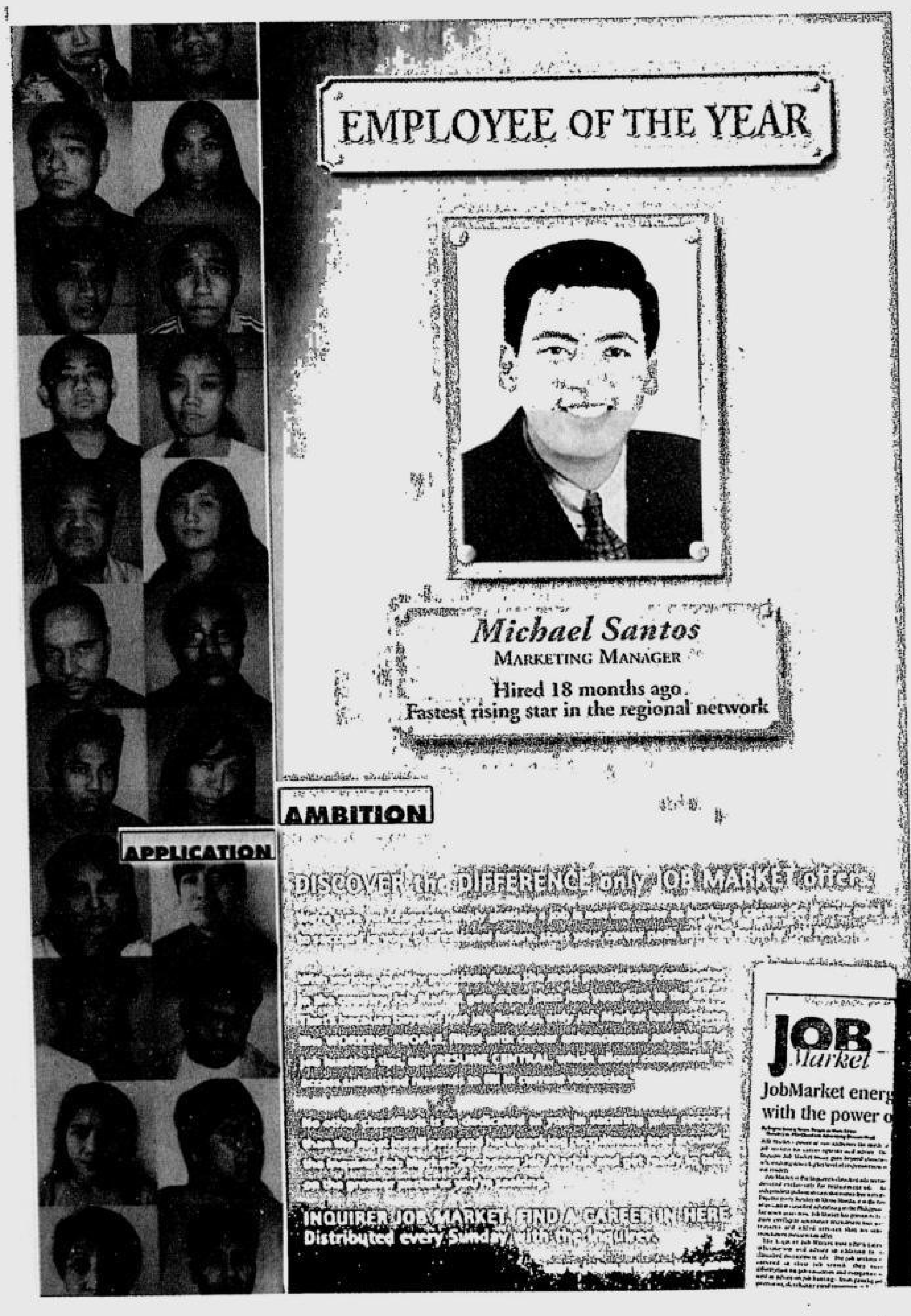
Defending champion Alex Pagulayan, Dennis Orcollo, Leonardo Andam and Ramil Gallego, on the other hand, picked up their second straight wins.

Pagulayan bested OFW Elvis Calasang, 9-4; Orcollo trounced another OFW Al James Ortega, 9-7; Andam beat Russian Petiza, 9-7; and Gallego defeated Victor Arpilleda, 9-7.

Lee Van Corteza, the 2006 All Japan Championships ruler, clustered four racks to subdue OFW Jundel Mazon, 9-5.

Other winners were Antonio Gabica, the 2006 Doha Asian Games 9-ball gold medalist and 8-ball silver medalist; Japan-based Antonio Lining and Jharome Peña.

Gabica beat Eduardo Villanueva, 9-5; Lining bested Jun Caro, 9-3; and Peña toppled giant killer Jech-Jech Lemen, 9-2.



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SPORTSWATCH

King of the Ring derby field swells

THE LIST OF CONFIRMED ENTRIES CONTINUES TO SWELL IN the P2-million King of the Ring 5-Cock Derby slated April 12, 14, 16 and 18 at the Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque. The long list of participants includes Ben Rodriguez and Esting Teopaco of Tarlac, Pepe Burgos of Batangas, Mark Dillon, Mon Negapatan,Jojo Layco, Terry Santos, Allen Reyes, Benson Patricio, Nelson Uba, Max Punzalan, Joel delos Reyes, A. Macruz, Adiong Tari, Rep. Gerry "Boy" Espina, Rudy Gatab, Danny Pactao, Delfin Garcia, Jojo Marquez, Tony Jaen, Ati Carlos, Allan Siaco, Darwin Torres, Roger Parungao, Muling Dorado, Enjie Dimaculangan and Boy Marcelino. To be hosted by Rolly Ligon, the event requires an entry fee of P6,600.

60 fights in GCAP 5-cocker today

ELECTRIFYING MATCHES ARE EXPECTED TODAY IN THE CROWD-drawing Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 5-Cock Derby Series which starts at 5 p.m. at the San Juan Coliseum. More than 60 fights are on tap in the derby sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Slated at the same venue tomorrow is the 2-Cock Ulutan with P10,000 going to each champion. Likewise, the much-awaited Fastest Win One-Cock Ulutan unfolds on Friday with a guaranteed prize of P500,000 up for grabs, said hosts Renato Shio and Butch Nunez. The fastest-win champion gets P120,000.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Flyboy (8), Bounce of the Wind/Might of the Wind (1), Shemarjoh (2), Royal Hairess (3)

Race 2—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Bull Rock (5), Lord Elgene (11), Tellmenolies (3), Speed Admiral (2), Batangas Force (7), Prospector's Cat/Valid Hazm (4)

Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Desiderata (1), Best Kept Secret (4), Real Club (2), El Banquero (7), Be Faithful (8)

Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Dazzling Affair (3), Blitzkrieg (10), I miss you (6), Coat of arms (8), Sir Benjo (7)

Race 5—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Silver Eagle/Firehouse (6), Loaded (11), Awesome Power (4), Mary Jane Bomb (2), Top Quest (10), Heart of the wind (9)

Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Ididitmyway (3), Verdadera (8), Karma (9), Romanticist (1), Honestly (2)

Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Blue Sheikh (4), Scarlet Skyterror (8), Beat D'Heat (9), Lady Tycoon (2), Scarlet Velvet (10)

Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Madel Line (4), Daddy's Girl (5), Expiditer (10), Da Mik Mok (7), Sovereign Dancer (9), Song Bird (1)

Bayron bows out; Ardina leads RP bid in Thailand

JAY BAYRON BOWED OUT OF the 2007 Australian Amateur championship in Sydney yesterday even as Dottie Ardina heads a small but crack Philippine contingent competing in the Thailand Ladies Amateur Open today.

Bayron, who nipped two others on the third playoff hole to survive the 72-hole stroke play eliminations Monday, bowed to New South Wales' Arnold Scott, 1-up, at the North South Wales Golf Club in La Perouse, Sydney.

. The reigning RP amateur champion held his ground against the No. 2 qualifier by playing a steady game majority of the way.

But he drove into a stymie on No. 18 to finish with a bogey while Scott made par to clinch the match.

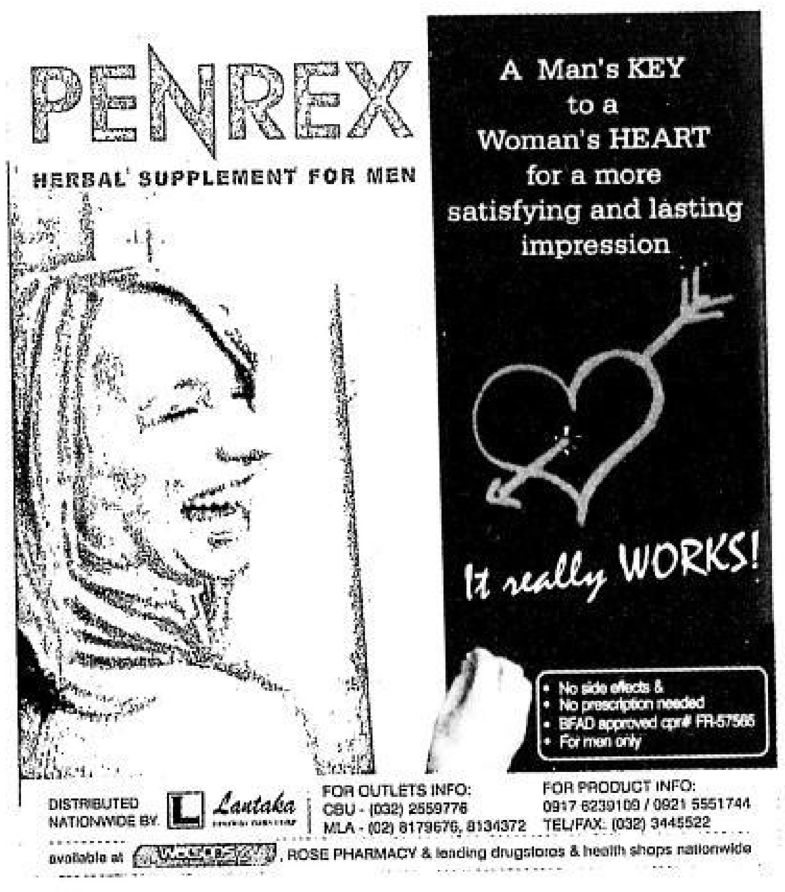
Eliminations topnotcher Andrew Dodt of Queensland fell by the wayside as Victoria's Leigh Deagan, the last qualifier, pulled off a 1-up victory after 19 holes to advance to the second round of Australia's premier amateur event.

Meanwhile, Ardina, spearhead of the ICTSI-backed national pool who steered RP to a best-ever runner-up finish in the Queen Sirikit Cup at The Country Club last week, is seeking to match or better her six-victory romp abroad last year.

The 13-year-old shotmaker is tipped as one of the players to watch in the three-day event which drew 119 players, including 62 bets from eight nations,

Joining Ardina, winner of the Junior World, the Singapore and Hong Kong Opens, Asia Pacific, Asean Juniors and the US Kids championship, in Thailand are Cyna Rodriguez, also a Junior World champion, Mia Piccio, Chihiro Ikeda, Bambee de la Paz and Asian Games veteran Anya Tanpinco.

ARDINA: Finest Filipina player at the moment takes her solid form to Thailand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Sidelights
World-class tennis action at the 18th Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Tennis Championship

It's summer again, which is time for the staging of the 18th Mitsubishi Lancer International Juniors Tennis Championship. For seven days, the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center will be a beehive of junior tennis players. With the best in the world vying for honors in this Group 1 event, expect a lot of hard-hitting action and endless rallies. Second only to the Asian Juniors Tennis Championship in terms of magnitude and toughness, this tournament is definitely a sign of tennis excellence in the Asia Pacific region.

Upon declaring the tournament open, Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Inc. President and CEO Tengo Takase mentioned that the Mitsubishi Lancer International Juniors Championship has been the spawning ground of future ATP and WTA stars.

So tough is this Group 1 ITF event that 11 out the world's top 100 are included. World no. 17 John Patrick Smith of Australia is seeded first in the boys' division while his compatriot Stephen Donald (ranked 21st) is seeded second. Completing the top 8 in the boys' division are 3rd seed Hsien-Ying Peng of Taiwan (ranked 23rd), 4th seed Kittipong Wachinamarov of Thailand (ranked 43rd), 5th seed Perakiat Siriluethaiwattanam of Thailand (ranked 51), 6th seed Andrew Thomas of Australia (ranked 55th), 7th seed Nikita Zotov of Russia (ranked 57) and 8th seed Eugen Bradsil of Slovakia (ranked 63rd).

The highest-ranked Filipino in this 64-man main draw is world no. 118 Kyle Joshua Dandan, the 13th seed Other Filipinos in the boys' draw are Raymon Villarte, Jose Lorenzo Opulencia, Joshua Tan Ho, Leander Lazaro, John Francis Largo, Carlos Espedido, Mark Jaypee Balce, Juan Fidel Regis, Akio Sy, Paul Magaway, Felix Assad, Ralph Kevin Barte, Francis Casey Alcantara, Kim Ivor Saraza, Russel Arcilla, Christian Canlas and Pablo Olivarez.

Campaigning in the boys' division for the second straight year are Peng, Siriuethaiwattanam,Thomas, Smith Dandad, Olivarez, Balce, Villarte, Barte, Tan Ho, Espedido, Canlas, Sy and Regis.

Equally tough (if not tougher) is the distaff side where 15 of the world's top 100 campaigners are entered, led by no. 11 and top seed Sacha Jones of New Zealand and no. 19 and second seed Elena Chernyakova or Russia. Kai-Chen Chang of Taiwan (ranked 29th) is seeded third while the American Veronica Ruo-Qi Li (ranked 40th) is seeded fourth.

In the girls' division, second timers are as follows: Jones of New Zealand, Chernyakova of Russia, Zijun Yang of Hong Kong, Noppawan Lertcheewakarn of Thailand, Chloe Jones of the United States, Tyra Calderwood of Australia, and Filipinas Denise Dy, Bein Zoleta, Zhane Quitara, Trudy Amoranto, Melissa Orteza and Jessica Agra.

Final matches will be aired on Solar Sports, April 8, 5:00pm – 7:00pm.
Replay on April 14, 10:00am -12:00pm

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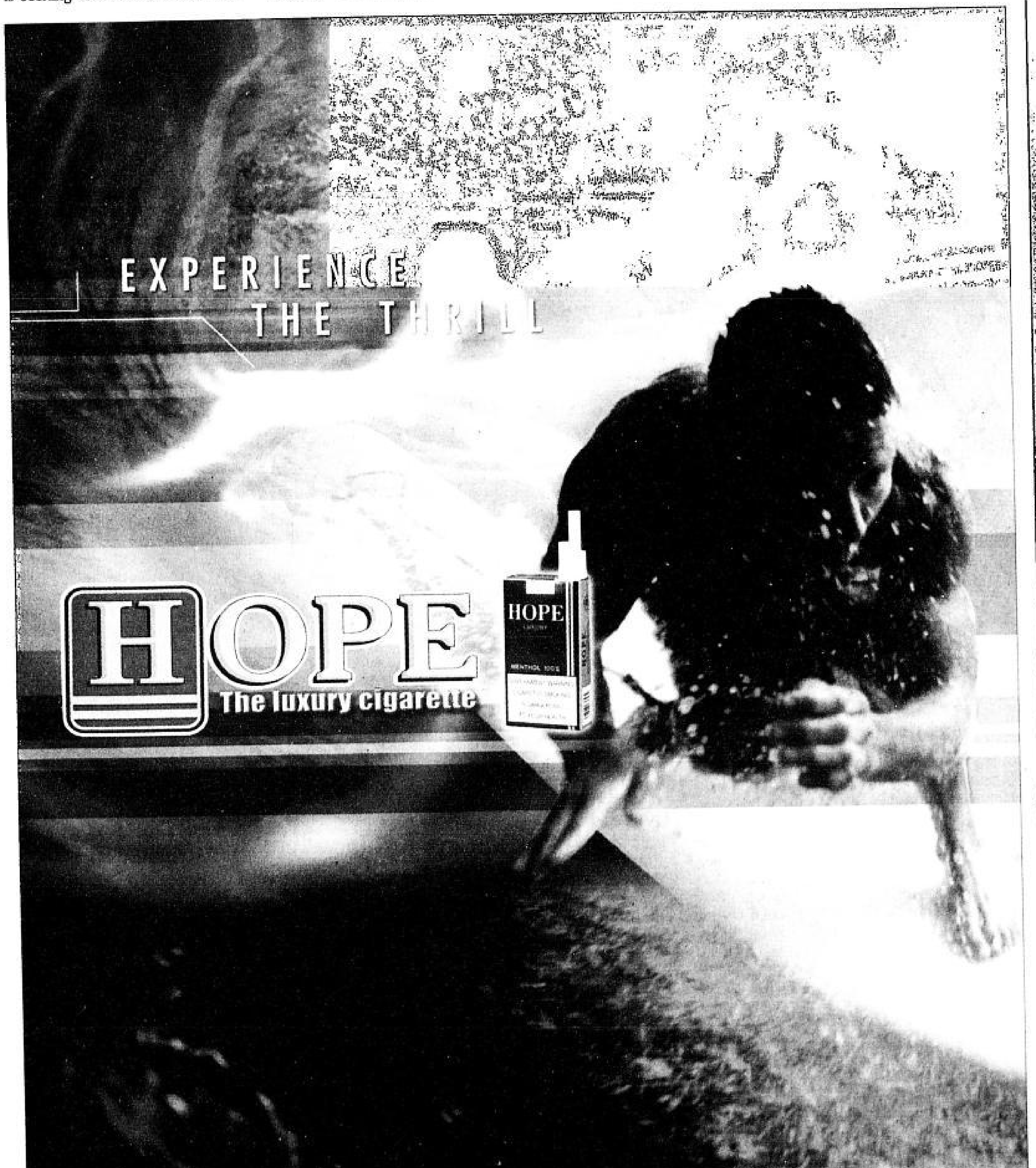
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Dandan gets going today

Heads 6 Filipino survivors in Lancer junior tennis main draw

By Marc Anthony Reyes

SIX MORE FILIPINOS MADE IT PAST the first round yesterday to keep 13th seed Kyle Joshua Dandan company in the 18th Mitsubishi Lancer ITF junior circuit at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Ralph Kevin Barte, the second ranked local player here, booted out Francis Alcantara, 6-4, 7-5, Pablo Olivarez II eliminated lucky loser James Canete, 6-1, 6-3, while Balce overwhelmed wild card Carlos Espedido, 6-3, 6-1.

Qualifier Raymund Villarete prevailed over Jose Opulencia, 6-0, 6-4, and Felix Assad crushed Paul Magaway, 6-2, 6-3, and wild card Christian Canlas ousted Arthur Tafalla, 6-3, 6-1.

Dandan, the country's top junior, will take on compatriot Mark Jaypee Balce today after drawing an opening-round bye.

Except for Balce, the survivors will be returning against well-rested foreign players today.

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RALPH Kevin Barte returns to Francis Alcantara in the second set. ERIK ARAZAS

Villarete will face top seed Patric John of Australia, while Canlas will have to contend with Donald Stephen, another Aussie who is ranked No. 2.

Barte will tangle with 8th seed Eugen Bradzil of Slovakia, Assad will lock horns with 12th seed Tomic Bernard of Australia, while Olivarez will take on 14th seed Rasmus Jonasson of Sweden.

"My goal is to make the finals because this is my last year in the junior circuit," said Dandan, who will turn 18 on May 8.

The 5th man of the RP Davis Cup team, Dandan recently suffered stinging losses in Thailand and Malaysia and saw his international junior ranking drop to 118 from a high of 92 last February.

Losing to superior foreign rivals were-Joshua Ho, Leander Lazaro, John Largo, Juan Fidel Regis, Mark Jimenez, Akio Sy, Kim Ivor Saraza and Russel Arcilla, Jr.

Ho bowed to Kevin Kung of Hong Kong, 6-3, 6-3; Lazaro lost to Seo Jeong-Han of Korea, 6-1, 6-1; Largo yielded to Sebastian Lavie of New Zealand, 6-3, 6-3; Regis was shut out by Borut Puc of Slovenia, 6-0, 6-0.

Jimenez was blanked by Milos Sekulic of Sweden, 6-0, 6-0, Sy was outclassed by Huang Hsu-chun of Chinese Taipei, 6-0, 6-1. Saraza bowed to Silvio Dadic of Croatia, 6-0, 6-1, while Arcilla went down to Sam Gould of New Zealand, 6-4, 6-1.

Owners want total Philracom revamp

By Roy Luarca

DISGRUNTLED HORSE OWNERS ARE ON a warpath. They want a total revamp of the Philippine Racing Commission (Philracom), the governing agency for local horse racing.

They have in fact requested President Macapagal-Arroyo to sack the entire Philracom board composed of chair Ret. Police Gen. Florencio Fianza and commissioners Eddie Jose, Boboc Domingo, Eyot Fernando and Vergel Cruz for committing acts inimical to the interest of the P12-billion industry.

In a signed letter received by Malacañang on March 6, fifty-five horse owners have specified recent board rulings deemed to be divisive and detrimental to the great majority of horse racing stakeholders.

The horse owners have accused Fianza of instigating the war when he declared that there's a cancer in horse racing with the horse owners themselves as the cause.

They also rapped Fianza for using vulgar words, accusing the horse owners of "masturbating" the facts and even going to the extent of calling horse racing a "bullshit industry," with horse owners administering illegal drugs on their mounts and conniving with each other to control the races' outcome.

Handicapping system

The group, spearheaded by former Philracom chair Augusto Benedicto Santos, former Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners (Marho) president Aristeo "Putch" Puyat and former commissioners Dante Arevalo, Marlon Cunanan and Ramon Balatbat, also blasted Fianza's proposed handicapping system which will take effect on April 1.

Under the scheme, champion and top caliber horses would be allowed to race against lowly horses, predictably leading to runaway victories and thereby eliminating balance competition.

Also cited was the inappropriate allocation by Fianza of additional prize money as provided for in a Congress bill. Instead of using these funds as incentives and rewards for the greater number of horse owners through ordinary races, the horse owners claimed Fianza arbitrarily allocated the funds for races that already carried hefty prizes.

Unethical practices

The horse owners also chided Fianza for tolerating unethical practices, like allowing Jose, who once served as executive director, to take a trainer's license and actively train horses.

The horse owners also threatened to boycott the races in protest against another recent Philracom ruling for 3-year-old horses that tend to favor select horse owners.

In the same letter dated March 5, the horse owners alleged that under Fianza's watch, horse racing is now characterized with confusion and dissension.

The horse owners insist that Fianza's lack of knowledge and exposure to horse racing is hurting the industry that contributes P1.2 billion annually to government coffers and employ thousands of workers.

This Pinoy-Briton's heart beats football

By Jasmine W. Payo

FILIPINO-BRITON DARREN HARTMANN could have spent summer lazing around in Laguna, especially with football practice still a month away.

But Hartmann has been filling the empty spaces in his schedule constructively, in more ways than just keeping himself in shape, while the national pool is on a break.

"We (foreign athletes with Filipino blood) are not just playing, we're promoting the sport we love as well," said Hartmann.

The 21-year-old defender, who will don the country's colors in the 2007 Southeast Asian Games, plans to open a football academy in Siniloan, Laguna, this July. And he believes the painful truth sports leaders have preached for quite some time now.

"The built of the Filipino is more for a football player than a basketball player, that's why we need to promote it," said Hartmann.

"At the moment, football is only until college in the Philippines. After college, what do you do after that? There's no professional league. There are no club teams.

"You don't get to play competitively unless you're with the national team. Not like in England, where you can actually make a living and put food on the table."

Where football is king

Growing up in a country where football has always been king, Hartmann has taken the sport quite seriously even as a kid in Southampton, England.

"It's something my brothers and I focused on when we were younger," he said. "And obviously, when people start, there are dreams of becoming professional and international players."

Hartmann had been training at the Southampton FC Academy when a holiday to his mother's hometown detoured his professional football hopes.

Career in England fades

"When I was 17, I came here for vacation and my family was like, 'You know there's a national football team here,'" recalled Hartmann. "Within two days, I was in the training camp. And when I decided to play in the Philippines, my career in England faded really."

It's a move Hartmann doesn't regret at all. His mother Josephine Calibjo, who hails from Bataan, also backed his decision.

"It's what I wanted to do," said Hartmann. "My family is very supportive. My mom is my biggest fan, and my dad, too. Back in England, my mom would turn up in every game even if it's raining or even if it's snowing. They supported me all the way. And now that we're building a football academy, they're very involved."

Although it may take some time before his passion rubs off on locals weaned on basketball, Hartmann said football will never tire him out.

"I've been living here for a year and I'll be pretty much spending the whole year concentrating on the SEA Games and the football academy," he said. "I'll always love football because every time you reach a goal, you want to set yourself a new goal. You just keep going."

DARREN HARTMANN: Every time you reach a goal, you want to set yourself a new goal. You just keep going. ROMY HOMILLADA

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NBC: Debuting Iligan outplays Gensan

DAVAO CITY—THE FIREFLY/ILIGAN CRUSADERS opened their campaign in the 2007 NBC National Cup basketball tournament on a winning note Monday by turning back MP Pacman Gensan, 74-67, at the Almendras gym here.

The Crusaders used a blistering 11-1 run in the last 2:09 of the game to deal Manny Pacquiao's Warriors their third defeat in four games in the tourney supported by Sulipicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, San Miguel Beer, Caltex, Sun Cellular, Firefly Lightings, Yahoo Philippines, Molten, Nature's Spring, Basketball TV and Viva Prime Channel.

After trailing for more than three quarters, the Crusaders banked on Harold Sta. Cruz and Marlon Kalaw to turn the game around with that big finish.

Sta. Cruz split his free throws off Jeffrey Locsin's foul and then Kalaw scored on a followup shot to tie the game for the first time at 66 inside the final two minutes.

The Crusaders of Mayor Lawrence Cruz and team manager Freddie Siao took control from thereon. They came out flat in the opening quarter and fell behind 7-25, but they kept on fighting until they saw an opening in the payoff period.

Former Pagadian star Bong Marata made a rousing debut with the Crusaders, scoring 18 points. But it was Sta. Cruz's 9-point, 13-rebound, 3-shotblock performance that helped bail out the Crusaders.

NBC action continues today with Montana Davao facing Valencia Golden Harvest.

The scores:

ILIGAN 74—Marata 18, Hardin 12, Go 10, Sta. Cruz 9, Kalaw 7, Paterno 5, Ayodelle 5, Booker 4, Gulyab 4, Gatchalian 0, Mangahas 0

GENSAN 67—Menor 19, Locsin 10, Coronado 8, Farochilen 6, Medalla 6, Sumampong 4, Ramos 3, Tadena 3, Denison 3, Mejorada 0, Calo 0

Quarters: 7-25, 27-36, 49-56, 74-67

Spring Oil cagers blast Acsat, gain semifinals

TWO-TIME CHAMPION SPRING Cooking Oil played just hard enough to beat ACSAT, 90-76, and clinch the first outright semifinal berth in the 2007 PICAA Open basketball tournament Monday night at the UM gym in Sampaloc.

Nino Marquez scattered 16 points and three others scored in double figures to lead the Cooking Oil Masters of national shooting champion Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla to their sixth straight win.

More importantly, the win gave Spring Cooking Oil a twice-to-beat advantage in the semis.

The game was tight until Spring, paced by Marquez's eight points, went on a 19-2 tear in the payoff period to pull away from 77-69 to 86-71.

Also providing offensive sock for Spring were Glenn Bolocon with 14, Marlon Legaspi with 11 and Ryan Regalado with 10.

Teodorlito Casil led Acsat with 17.

CKP 168 downed Wang's Ballclub, 78-66, in other match to score its fourth win in six games and fortify its bid for the other semis berth.

The scores:

SPRING 90—Marquez 16, Bolocon 14, Legaspi 11, Ragalado 10, Mallari 9, Salud 8, Barnson 7, Munoz 6, Epondulan 5, Reyes 4, Tajonera 0, Cuenca 0

ACSAT 76—Casil 17, Quilaquigay 12, Bularon 12, Jabaybay 12, Lapus 10, De Guzman 6. Nunal 6. Dela Pena 1, Racla 0

Quarters: 19-17, 52-40, 67-59, 90-76

Region's top bridge players due for Asean tournament

SOUTHEAST ASIA'S FINEST BRIDGE players converge in Makati City on Dec. 7 to 11 for the 29th Asean Bridge Club Championship hosted by the Philippine Tournament Bridge Association (PTBA) at the Renaissance hotel.

The multination meet enjoys the support of Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano and is expected to promote the game in the country.

PTBA president KT Yang and organizing committee chair Nene Quimson said the expanded format is expected to make event tougher.

Apart from Southeast Asian countries, teams from China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Macau, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Britain and the United States have also been invited to compete. *Inquirer Sports Staff*

CHERIFER
8
9

TANGKAD SAGAD: Players from Berkeley School and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Montessori watch as Cherifer events coordinator Macky Pablo (center) makes the ceremonial toss before the two schools' championship match in the recent North Luzon leg of the 2007 Cherifer Tangkad Sagad Basketball Tournament at Eastern College gym in Baguio City. Tournament director Edmundo Badolato supervises the Adidas-backed under-12 caging.

Wallace weaves magic as Detroit trips Denver

DETROIT—RASHEED WALLACE HIT A desperation 60-foot shot at the buzzer to force overtime and the Detroit Pistons then went on to beat the Denver Nuggets, 113-109, in Auburn Hills on Monday.

Denver appeared poised to pick up the win, leading 98-95 with just 1.5 seconds left to play and needed to just put the ball into play at midcourt.

But Marcus Camby's inbounds pass bounced off Denver's Allen Iverson and Detroit's Tayshuan Prince, giving Wallace one last chance at a two-handed shot. It banked in just as the buzzer sounded, sending the game into overtime.

"We shoot those all the time before the game," Wallace told reporters. "This one went in, but it isn't like it won a championship or anything."

The Nuggets led in the extra period as well, 106-103, but Wallace hit another key three-pointer with a minute to play to tie the game.

Antonio McDyess then hit a go-ahead free throw before the Pistons sealed the game with several more free throws in the dying seconds.

Denver coach George Karl took the loss in stride, considering how the Pistons got into overtime in the first place.

"You can't criticize a lucky shot," Karl said. "That was a lucky shot."

In other games, it was Miami 106, Atlanta 89; Boston 95, Toronto 87; Orlando 94, New York 89; Houston 106, Milwaukee 87; Chicago 100, Portland 89; Utah 103, Washington 97; Phoenix 105, Memphis 87; San Antonio 126, Golden State 89.

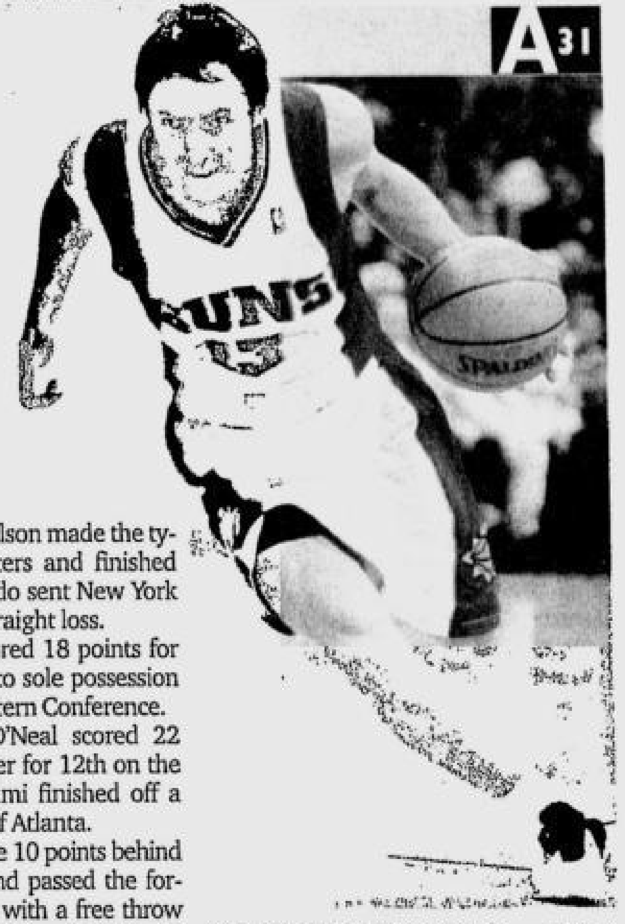
In New York, Jameer Nelson made the tying and go-ahead 3-pointers and finished with 18 points, and Orlando sent New York to its season-high fourth straight loss.

Hedo Turkoglu also scored 18 points for the Magic, who moved into sole possession of seventh place in the Eastern Conference.

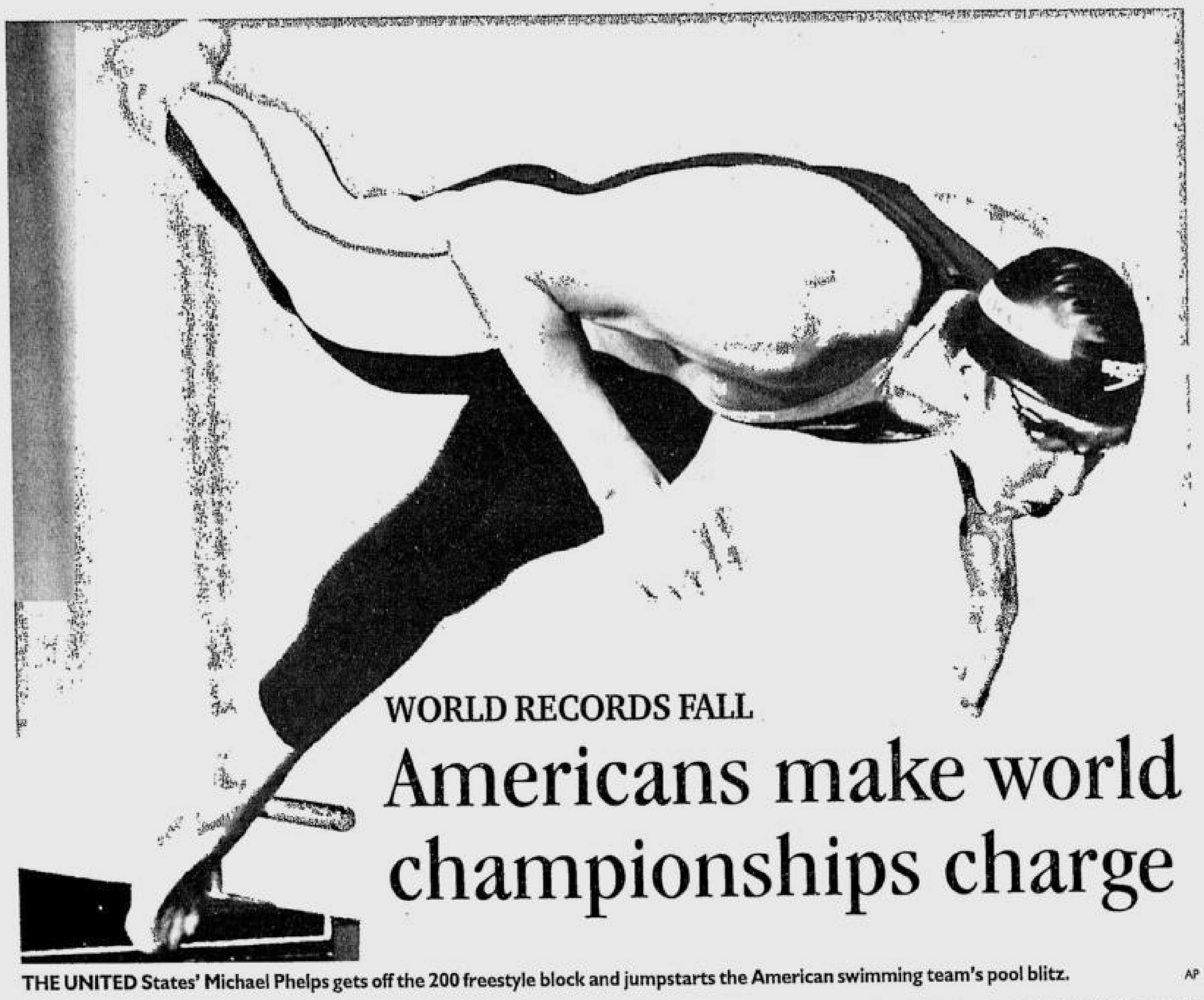
In Miami, Shaquille O'Neal scored 22 points to pass Reggie Miller for 12th on the NBA's career list and Miami finished off a four-game season sweep of Atlanta.

O'Neal entered the game 10 points behind Miller's total of 25,279, and passed the former Indiana sharpshooter with a free throw midway through the first half. *Reuters, AP*

GAMES TODAY (*Basketball TV*)
8 a.m.—Dallas vs. New Orleans
(replay @ 6 p.m.)
10:30 a.m.—Memphis vs. LA Lakers
(replay @ 9:30 p.m.)



VICTORIOUS: Steve Nash REUTERS



WORLD RECORDS FALL

Americans make world championships charge

THE UNITED States' Michael Phelps gets off the 200 freestyle block and jumpstarts the American swimming team's pool blitz. AP

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—FOUR WORLD records were set Tuesday at the world championships—three by American superstars Michael Phelps, Natalie Coughlin and Aaron Peirsol, the other by lesser-known Italian Federica Pellegrini.

Phelps set his world mark in the 200-meter freestyle, in a time of 1 minute, 43.86 seconds, to break Australian Ian Thorpe's previous record of 1:44.06 at Fukuoka, Japan in 2001.

In the next race, Coughlin broke her own world record in the 100-meter backstroke, finishing in 59.44. Her previous record of 59.58 was set in 2002.

Peirsol broke the world 100 backstroke record in a time of 52.98 seconds, bettering his previous record of 53.17 set at Indianapolis, Indiana in April 2005. Fellow American Ryan Lochte took the silver in 53.50 and Liam Tancock of Britain was third in 53.61.

Peirsol is the only swimmer to have won the event three times and at three consecutive world championships. He has six individual gold medals overall at world championships.

"I think it's the most impressive team I've ever been on," Peirsol said. "Michael was incredible, Natalie did well. So I had to do something too."

Pellegrini broke her world record in a women's 200-meter freestyle semifinal in a time of 1:56.64, improving on the previous mark of Franziska Van Almsick of Germany, set Aug. 3, 2002 at Berlin.

The Americans won their fourth gold medal of the night when Kate Ziegler finished first in the 1,500 meters in a time of 15:53.05.

Not known for going to the early lead, Phelps opened under world-record pace on the first 50 meters, with Pieter Van Den Hoogenband close behind.

Van den Hoogenband took silver in 1:46.28. Park Tae-hwan of South Korea earned the bronze.

It was Phelps' record 12th world championship gold and 15th medal overall.

Thorpe, Van den Hoogenband and Phelps finished 1-2-3 in the 200 free at Athens, the so-called "Race of the Century" and the only time all three of the swimming greats faced each other.

The latest matchup was missing Thorpe, who retired in November at age 24.

Thorpe's mark was considered to be untouchable but Phelps slashed almost a second and half off his best time to overhaul Thorpe's quickest swim.

The American is competing in up to eight events at Rod Laver Arena this week and his victory makes him the man to beat in next year's Beijing Olympics.

"I did want to race (Thorpe) here, I'm a little disappointed, but I was able to get there and race one of the best in Peter," Phelps said.

"I just wanted to take it out tonight and knew the biggest key was to get out after the first hundred. That's all I wanted to do and try to make a step on the third 50 and by then it's all adrenaline."

Coughlin and Laure Manaudou were the only women to go under one minute in the backstroke final. Manaudou took the silver in 59.87, while Japan's Reiko Nakamura finished third.

Coughlin has broken the minute barrier five times in her career.

"It has been a goal of mine for five years now to break my best, which is a world record," said Coughlin. "I felt really strong and confident." *AP*

PEIRSOL AP

COUGHLIN AFP

Upsets hit Sony tennis; Federer, Serena advance

KEY BISCAYNE, FLORIDA—PREVIOUS two champions Kim Clijsters and Svetlana Kuznetsova were ousted in three-setters in the fourth round of the Sony Ericsson Open on Monday.

Clijsters, the 2005 winner, was caught from behind by Li Na of China, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2, and defending champ Kuznetsova lost to Shahar Peer of Israel, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.

Former three-time champion Serena Williams set up a showdown with top-seeded Maria Sharapova, who ousted Venus Williams on Sunday, and second-seeded Justine Henin strolled into the quarterfinals by beating Vera Zvonareva of Russia, 6-3, 6-2.

In men's play, top-ranked Roger Federer served poorly but still beat Nicolas Almagro of Spain 7-5, 6-3 to reach the fourth round. Federer won his 14th match in a row at Key Biscayne, where he seeks his third consecutive title.

"I'm still kind of looking to come back into the rhythm after not having many matches in the last couple of weeks," Federer said.

He will next face Argentine qualifier Guillermo Canas, who ended Federer's 41-match winning streak two weeks ago at Indian Wells. Canas advanced by beating Richard Gasquet of France, 7-6 (3), 6-3.

The final appearance at Key Biscayne for fourth-seeded Clijsters ended with her first ever loss to Li. Clijsters plans to marry and retire this year.

In only her fourth tournament this year, she fell before the quarterfinals for the first time. She was broken in half of her 14 service games by Li, the highest-ranked Chinese player ever, and conceded seven double faults.

Kuznetsova, at a career-high No. 3 ranking, lost the last four games to No. 16 Peer, who repeated her victory from the Australian Open fourth-round.

In a third-round match delayed a day by rain, Serena Williams beat Lucie Safarova of the Czech Republic, 6-3, 6-4. *AP*

Thai moto riders rule Palawan race

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—DEFENDING champion Arnon Theplib and Arongkot Pinpon led a Thailand sweep of the Mayor Edward Hagedorn Cup in the 2007 Puerto Princesa City Motocross Masters of Asia FIM-UAM Asian Motocross Championships yesterday at the Sta. Monica Racetrack here.

Theplib bucked a slow start in both races to rule the centerpiece Asian 125 crown and the Mayor Edward Hagedorn Cup against Aussie champion Kane Scanlan.

Pinpon, a 12-year-old first timer in the event, captured the Asian Junior 85 plum over Farhan Hendra of Indonesia.

The Philippine-NAMSSA Team, egged on by an estimated 25,000 spectators, salvaged third place overall behind 10-time national champion Glen Aguilar and Jenzen Manuel, who finished third in the Asian 125 and Asian Junior 85, respectively.

Three Indonesians—Hannu Malherbe, Denny Orlando and Aldi Lazaroni—finished fourth, fifth and sixth, respectively while another newcomer Erdenbileg Khaliunbold of Mongolia was seventh overall.

Completing the top 10 finishers were Japanese Tabuchi Takeshi, Cebuano Jon Eleazar Adlawan and China's top bet Shi Yu Weng.

FIM-UAM vice president and Asian Motocross Commission president Macky Carapiet said Theplib will be sent to compete in any European Motocross World Championship leg of his choice all-expenses paid.

Where golf championships are concerned, Tiger rules the world

MIAMI—LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN WAS making his first trip to America. Prom Meesawat was playing his first US PGA Tour event. Brett Quigley was making his 293rd start on the tour without winning.

They were among the players Tiger Woods had to beat this past weekend in the CA Championship at Doral Resort.

And that makes it worth asking whether these World Golf Championships are as tough to win as they sound.

"The best players in the world are here," Woods said on Sunday after his two-shot victory over Brett Wetterich, who was playing a minor Nationwide Tour event in Louisiana at this time a year ago.

OK, no more name dropping.

Blue Monster

The course nicknamed the Blue Monster hosted the top 50 in the world ranking, and even Justin Rose pulling out with a back injury and Davis Love III withdrawing on Saturday when a friend died did not dilute the star power in Miami.

Arnold Palmer Invitational winner Vijay Singh was there. So were Jim Furyk and Phil Mickelson, Ernie Els and Retief Goosen, Adam Scott and Geoff Ogilvy.

Woods beat them all, as he usually does.

His record in the World Golf Championships is astounding. Woods has played these events 24 times since they began in 1999, and he already has 13 titles and more than $17 million.

That's a career for David Duval, minus a major and a 59.

Throw out the fickle Match Play Championship, which Woods has won twice. In the WGC events that are stroke play, Woods is 11-of-16. He has never finished out of the top 10.

And while it would be easy to attribute Woods' five victories in the Bridgestone Invitational to Firestone, a course he annihilates, his six victories in the CA Championship are remarkable. He became the first player in US PGA Tour history to win a tournament six times on six courses—Valderrama (Spain), Mount Juliet (Ireland), Capital City Club (Atlanta), Harding Park (San Francisco), The Grove (London) and Doral, where he now has won three straight years.

WOODS

But back to the field for a minute.

The guy who nearly kept Woods from his unprecedented four straight professional majors was neither Mickelson nor Singh, rather Bob May at the 2000 US PGA Championship at Valhalla. And when Woods was trying to become the first player to capture three US majors in the same season, it was Rich Beem who stopped him at Hazeltine in 2002.

The US Players Championship is considered the strongest major event in golf because all 150 players are capable of winning, and you only have to look at Craig Perks to realize that.

Easiest major

Some believe the Masters is the easiest major to win because it has the smallest field of the majors—97 this year, which is the largest since there were 103 players in 1966.

The field at Firestone had 41 players when it was converted into a World Golf Championship in 1999. The first three years it was limited only to Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup players (Woods won all three).

What now is the CA Championship had its largest field this year at 73 players.

Maybe one reason Woods wants his new tournament in Washington to have a limited field is because he wins so often.

Of his 56 victories on the US PGA Tour, 27 have come in tournaments that do not have a full field of at least 144 players. That would be four Masters, 13 WGCs, seven invitationals (Bay Hill and Memorial), two Mercedes Championships and one US Tour Championship.

Those are some numbers that can support the argument that limited-field events are easier to win.

But there is no getting around one fact that supports his world domination.

If the WGCs are easier to win, why isn't anyone else winning them?

Better

"He's just better than us," Ogilvy said.

The list of guys who have finished second to Woods at WGC events include Furyk, Mickelson, Scott, Singh, Goosen, David Toms, Love, Chris DiMarco, Justin Leonard and John Daly.

True, the field is smaller at these tournaments. But the WGCs were designed to bring together the best in the world, and the best are usually there at the end.

And by the end of the week, Woods is usually at the top. *AP*

SPORTS

Pole vault star due

DOHA ASIAN GAMES SILVER medalist Rosalinda Samsu of Malaysia will lead the list of foreign participants in the 3rd Philippine Pole Vault Festival set March 30 at the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City.

Fresh from a sterling performance in the Taiwan International Pole Vault Championship over the weekend, where she beat American Amy Limen for the gold, the 30-year old Malaysian beauty confirmed her participation in the third edition of the Festival aimed to foster camaraderie and promote the sports to Filipinos.

"It's a big development," said organizing committee chairman Emerson Obiena. "We just received the fax message confirming the arrival of Rosalinda Samsu."

A grizzled veteran, the 5-foot-6 Samsu made waves when she finished second in the Doha Games last December. Jerome Margallo, the country's top collegiate pole vaulter and the reigning UAAP champion, will lead the local charge in the event.

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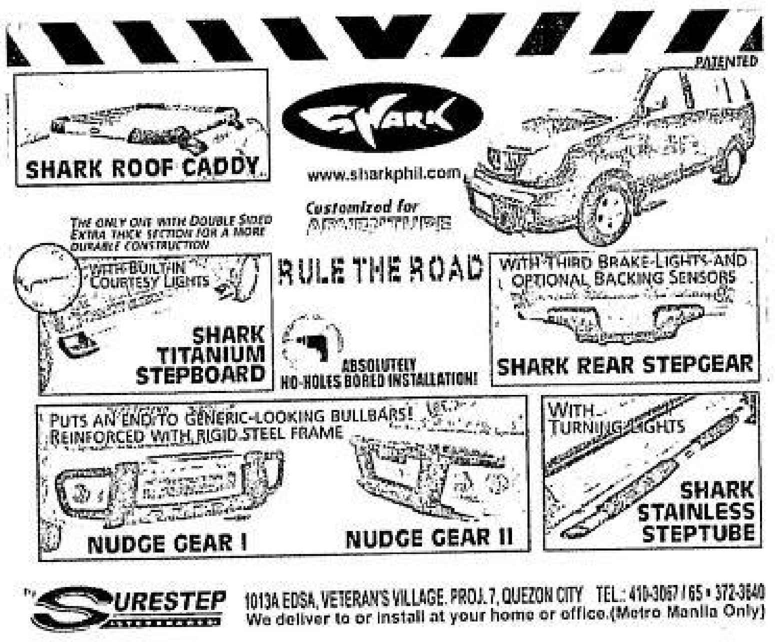
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NESTEA BEACH VOLLEY

Favored pairs strike

By June Navarro

IT PAYS TO KNOW THE ENEMY.

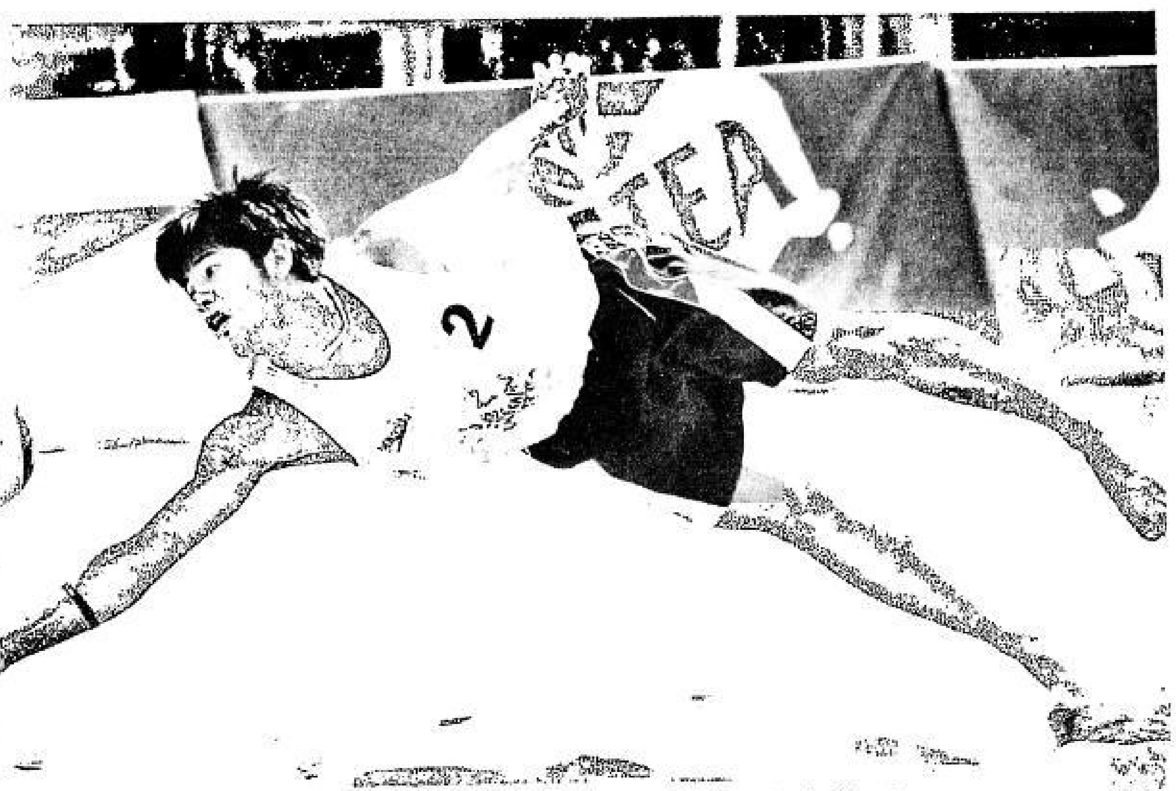
University of the Visayas reasserted its mastery over pre-tournament pick Southwestern University to lead the march of favorites in the Visayas qualifying of the 2007 Nestea Beach Volley yesterday at the La Salle Greenhills sandcourt.

Janez Armie Igot and Jusabelle Brillo of UV exploited their familiarity of Southwestern's Marites Natad and Janelle Tabio to escape with a 21-15, 21-23, 15-11 triumph and boost their chances of making it to the national championships in Boracay.

"We're quite familiar with their style," said Igot of Natad and Tabio, whom the Lady Lancers defeated in the M. Lhuillier Cup beach volley finals last week in Cebu City.

"That win also gave us the psychological advantage coming into this game," added Brillo, whose partnership with Igot produced a fourth-place finish in the women's division of the Nestea Beach Volley national championships last year.

University of San Agustin also shaped up as the other top contender when Nerissa Bautista and Marian Joy Jamora hardly broke a sweat in walloping Frances Kareem Kristeen Ybañez and Jerymie Montalvo of University of San Carlos, 21-11, 21-7.


EDWARD Carlo Tecson of the University of San Carlos dives to keep the ball in play. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Bautista, a 5-foot-10 spiker who had a year-long stint in the national training pool, played just hard enough, showing only flashes of his powerful spiking and tough defense.

"I'm saving energy for the other matches," said Bautista, 21, who finished fourth in the national championships last year with Marie Dolendo as her partner.

The favored pair of Juliet Mae Marikit and Genie Sabas from University of San Jose Recoletos also notched a 21-17, 21-15 win at the expense of Foundation University's Maria Lowella Manos and Wilma Magsayo.

Sisters Yvonne Lorraine and Erika Camille Verano of University of Southern Philippines Foundation pulled off a 21-12, 21-11 drubbing of University of St. La Salle Bacolod's Sheryl Silva and Realyn Valeriano.

In the men's division, Foundation University's Rolando Agus and Arnel Madeo blasted Alfredo Tejones and Ian Tuala of University of Negros Occidental Recoletos, 21-17, 21-13, while San Agustin's Arnulfo Lucenio and Allan Dayang scored a 22-24, 21-17, 15-11 victory over Leo Escaniel Jr. and Ernie Villaruel of Iloilo Doctors College.

USLS-Bacolod's Emmanuel Marlon Luces and Mark Sabusap carved out a 21-18, 21-13 thumping of USJR's Leoneldie Sanchez and Ariel Carumba before James Ryan Rivera and Ronald Melencion of USPF beat USC's Roderick Arenasa and Erward Carlo Tecson, 21-16, 21-19.

Three teams from the men's and women's divisions will advance to the Boracay championships on April 19-21 after today's matches.

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By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT Bank yesterday said the Philippine economy would likely sustain a "modest" growth of 5.4 percent this year and 5.8 percent in 2008 and has urged the government to work for a much higher growth of 8 percent to address a deteriorating labor situation.

The bank said in its Asian Development Outlook 2007 that while robust remittances, low real interest rates and higher government expenditure would keep the economy firmly on the growth track this year and next, growth would still not be strong enough to lift employment if investment remained weak.

"The Philippines needs to move to a higher growth trajectory and create more and higher-quality jobs for the rising numbers of unemployed, underemployed, and new entrants in the labor force," the bank said.

The projected growth rates for the

ADB/B3

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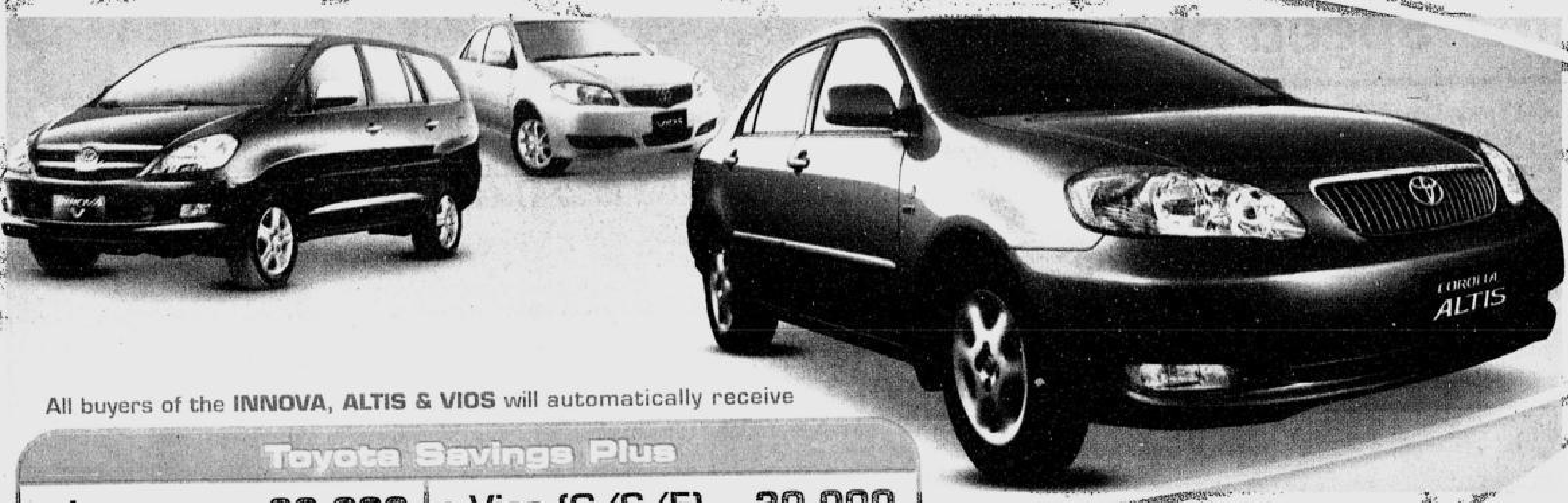

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Stocks close higher after 2-day slide

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.78-percent higher yesterday as Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. provided support after a two-day slide, dealers said.

They said cautious investors took profits on recent winners, including mining stocks and select blue chips, amid a lack of solid leads.

The composite index added 24.71 points at 3,174.75. It traded between 3,150.04 and 3,186.14. The broader all-share index rose 3.95 points to 2,033.40. However, the market's breadth was negative with 63 decliners and 43 advancers, with 59 stocks unchanged.

Turnover was 5.03 billion shares worth P3.08 billion.

"The market is still consolidating within the 3,100-3,200 range, with no strong leads to guide investors," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

Investors are also keeping a wary eye on Wall Street, which closed narrowly mixed overnight after a surprise drop in new US home sales for February triggered further concern that US economic growth is slowing more than expected, he said.

Top-traded PLDT extended Monday's gains, adding another P45 to P2,545.

Ayala Land Inc. rose 50 centavos to P15.75 after the company announced it had agreed on the main terms of a proposed joint venture with Manila Jockey Club Inc. to develop a horse race track in Manila.

Profit-taking hit the country's biggest conglomerates, with Ayala Corp. down P5 at P540 while SM Investments fell P2.50 to P365. *AFP*

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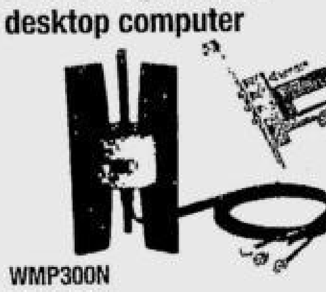

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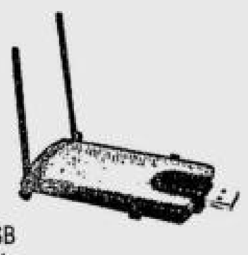

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 27, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	10.5	11	10.5	10.5	39,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	58	59	58	59	1,122,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	65	65.5	65	65	1,286,100
China Banking Corp.	860	860	860	860	800
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.54	0.54	0.53	0.53	2,890,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	102	103	101	101	254,580
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	62	62	60.5	60.5	1,003,500
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	50	50	50	50	1,700
Philippine National Bank	48	48	47	47	15,300
Phil. Savings Bank	58	62	58	62	6,000
Security Bank Corp.	77.5	77.5	77	77.5	262,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	58.5	59	58.5	58.5	6,500
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	7	7	7	7	183,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	6	6	6	6	2,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1640	1650	1640	1650	5,220
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.86	1.88	1.86	1.88	156,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	660	660	650	650	2,270
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2155	2170	2155	2155	710
Ivantage Corp.	1.56	1.56	1.54	1.54	120,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.1	14,403,000
First Gen Corp.	55.5	56	55.5	56	430,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	70.5	71	70.5	71	123,600
Manila Electric Co. A	70.5	71	70.5	70.5	162,500
Manila Electric Co. B	70	71.5	70	71	1,087,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.5	9.6	9.3	9.6	1,677,000
Petron Corp.	4.55	4.65	4.55	4.65	7,837,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.32	0.37	0.3	0.3	23,200,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2	2	2	2	21,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.44	1.44	1.42	1.42	150,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.85	3.85	75,000
CADP Group Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	25	25	25	15,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	55	56.5	55	56	726,800
Liberty Flour Mills Inc.	23	25	23	25	6,400
RFM Corp.	1.26	1.34	1.26	1.3	132,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	208,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64.5	64.5	63.5	64	59,000
San Miguel Corp. B	72.5	72.5	71.5	72	164,900
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	25,000
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.36	2.36	2.26	2.3	1,667,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.25	17.25	17	17	7,063,900
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.7	1.78	1.7	1.72	6,947,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.65	4.65	4.6	4.6	4,600,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.7	8.7	8.6	8.6	451,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	50,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.1	5.1	5	5.1	1,594,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	10,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.78	0.82	0.78	0.82	310,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.37	0.38	0.35	0.35	13,490,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.015	546,300,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.015	120,400,000
Ayala Corp.	550	550	535	540	241,730
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.92	0.92	1,720,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.1	8.2	8.1	8.2	729,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.6	6.6	718,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.07	0.0725	38,900,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.45	3.5	958,000
APC Group Inc.	0.42	0.43	0.4	0.4	17,910,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	62,100,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.7	1.72	1.64	1.64	12,798,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	4	4	4	4	1,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	4.25	4.3	4.1	4.1	355,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10.25	10	10.25	55,700
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.35	3.55	3.25	3.35	37,252,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.6	7.2	7.4	3,426,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5	5	5	5	12,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	140,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.7	2.75	488,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	13	13	12.5	12.75	102,300
Medco Holdings	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	800,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	9.7	9.7	9	9	933,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.36	2.38	2.3	2.34	2,160,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.3	0.3	9,870,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	50,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.39	0.41	0.38	0.38	208,880,000
SM Investments Corp.	367.5	370	362.5	365	463,950
South China Resources Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.16	1.16	268,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.32	0.32	0.28	0.29	9,590,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.2	2,340,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.5	16	15.5	15.75	21,222,800
Belle Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.42	1.42	6,665,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.32	1.48	1.32	1.44	3,299,000
Cityland Development Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	1,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.49	0.51	0.49	0.49	2,420,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	258,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.48	2.5	2.48	2.48	1,241,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	97,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.45	0.45	0.41	0.41	15,430,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	50,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.76	0.77	0.75	0.75	14,850,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.15	0.165	0.14	0.14	107,190,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.66	1.66	14,621,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.3	840,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.32	0.32	0.3	0.3	2,430,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	85,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	16,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	610,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.8	0.81	0.79	0.8	8,210,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	1,200,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.026	0.027	0.024	0.024	3,800,000
Megaworld Corp.	3.15	3.3	3.15	3.25	45,866,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.4	4.65	4.4	4.65	14,000
Mrc Allied Ind. Inc.	0.89	0.89	0.8	0.81	9,960,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	670,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	5,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	20.5	20.5	19.75	20	638,600
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.59	0.62	0.59	0.62	8,850,000
SM Development Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	377,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.75	6,406,500
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.69	0.69	620,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.26	0.225	0.23	15,190,000
Zipporah Rlty Hldgs Inc.	1.22	1.22	1.18	1.18	38,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24.75	25	24.75	25	201,900
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	10,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.7	1.72	1.7	1.7	6,480,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1275	1275	1260	1260	53,090
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.9	6.9	6.7	6.7	471,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2530	2555	2530	2545	149,380
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	35,010,000
Diversified Fin. Network	4	4	4	4	1,000
Imperial Res.	0.031	0.033	0.029	0.03	234,500,000
Ionics Inc.	2.28	2.3	2.28	2.3	162,000
IPVG Corp.	6.6	6.7	6.5	6.7	997,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	2,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	7,500,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.62	1.64	1.62	1.62	310,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.1	2.14	2.1	2.14	14,000
Philweb Corp.	0.047	0.047	0.046	0.046	36,200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	110,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	27.5	27.5	27	27	1,246,700
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.14	1.22	1.14	1.18	3,369,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	7,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.55	1,125,000
Manila Jockey Club	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	300,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.39	0.43	0.39	0.39	15,570,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.95	0.96	2,080,000
EDUCATION					
IPeople Inc.	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.3	104,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	3	3	2.85	2.85	563,000
Paxys Inc.	27.5	27.5	27	27.5	72,200
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.2	5.3	5.1	5.2	158,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.2	954,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	204,200,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	12.75	13	12.25	12.5	9,649,400
Benguet Corp. A	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	29,500
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.86	1.88	1.72	1.74	75,294,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.29	36,390,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.36	0.36	0.33	0.34	1,610,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.032	0.032	0.03	0.03	1,062,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.036	0.036	0.033	0.033	641,100,000
Omico Corp.	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.02	610,400,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.55	4.65	4.5	4.55	13,263,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	22.5	23	22.5	23	222,600
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.79	0.85	0.79	0.81	15,890,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.34	1.34	1.28	1.28	7,554,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.53	0.54	0.49	0.5	21,610,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.014	120,400,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.014	39,500,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013	255,700,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.4	9.9	9.4	9.9	72,000
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PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	11	11	11	11	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	11	11	11	11	800
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	25.5	26	25.5	26	553,900
Metro Pac. Inv.- Warrants	3.3	3.35	3.3	3.35	47,000
SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES					
Information Capital Tech.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	1,000

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Manila Water allots ₱30B for 5-yr expansion

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

EAST ZONE WATER PROVIDER Manila Water Co. Inc. (MWCI) of the Ayala group is earmarking P30 billion in capital investments starting this year to 2011 to accelerate the expansion of its water and wastewater network.

The budget is higher than the P23 billion that MWCI poured into the East Zone during the past 10 years.

MWCI president Antonino Aquino said after the company's stockholders' meeting yesterday that capital investments would concentrate on four key areas—the expansion of its water distribution system by laying down new pipes in underserved areas, replacing old pipes to cut down non-revenue water and focus on service reliability, tapping new water sources and improving wastewater services.

The East Zone is home to some five million people and consists of the cities of Makati, Pasig, Mandaluyong, Marikina and Taguig, most parts of Quezon City, some parts of Manila, and the municipalities of San Juan and Pateros. It also covers cities and municipalities in the Rizal province further east of Metro Manila.

With the laying down of new pipes and the expansion of its water distribution system, MWCI hopes to expand its water network to six million customers over the next five years. Last year, MWCI installed 603 kilometers of new pipelines, bringing the total to 1,877 kilometers since 1997 when the company took over the East Zone concession from the government under a 25-year concession agreement.

To partly fund its expansion, MWCI is negotiating with the European Investment Bank, the financing arm of the European Union, to borrow the equivalent of 60 million (euro) or $70 million with a possible term of 10 years.

Last year, MWCI closed a P3.5-billion syndicated loan facility as well as a $60-million loan from International Finance Corp. MWCI has yet to draw from the IFC loan.

Aquino told stockholders that to complement the expansion and ensure the reliability of its water supply, MWCI would work with the state-owned Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System to develop new water sources. This will include building the next major water source dubbed Laiban Dam in the eastern part of Rizal. The project is expected to be finished by 2013.

ICTSI bags South American port deal

By Riza T. Olchondra

INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER TERMINAL Services Inc. yesterday disclosed that it has won another port contract in South America.

"ICTSI has been informed by the Guayaquil Port Authority that ICTSI has been declared the winner of the 20-year public service concession for the container and multipurpose terminal at the Port of Guayaquil," the company said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

ICTSI said it would sign a 20-year concession agreement for the port, which handles containerized, general and bulk cargo, in May 2007.

The port of Guayaquil is in Ecuador, on the west coast of the South American continent.

Early this month, ICTSI chair and president Enrique Razon Jr. said ICTSI wanted to venture into Latin America and India to continue its aggressive international expansion.

The Philippine-based international port operator has its flagship in Manila's south harbor. It also operates in Japan, Indonesia, Poland, Brazil, Syria, Madagascar and China.

Foreign operations accounted for 60 percent of the port operator's P1.8-billion net income for 2006, compared with 34 percent of the P1.34-billion profit in 2005.

ADB sees . . .

From page B1

Philippines for the two-year period were below the ADB's forecast average for Southeast Asia of 5.6 percent for this year and 5.9 percent for 2008.

Last year when the country posted a gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 5.4 percent, the bank noted that the unemployment rate in the country remained close to 8 percent, with slightly more than half of the jobless being high school and college graduates.

The bank also cited as a "worrisome" trend the number of underemployed, which rose to 23 percent of total employment in 2006, up from 18 percent in 2004.

Underemployment is a situation where a person has a job but is not employed in the desired capacity such as in the number of working hours a day.

The ADB report said the country would have to aim for a growth of at least 8 percent for two decades by boosting its services sector without neglecting the industry sector. Without progress in industrialization, it said such a high-growth scenario would never be possible.

Thomas Crouch, ADB country director for the Philippines, said there was no reason why the country could not grow as much as India, which used to be a laggard with a growth rate of only 2-3 percent a year in previous years.

But to attain sustainable growth, he said there was a need to "re-energize the manufacturing sector, which tend to be hollowed out" instead of relying only on the services sector.

He said revitalizing the manufacturing sector, which accounts for 70 percent of industrial output, should not be in such a way that the government would pick the "winners" or the sectors that would receive fiscal incentives.

"The solution is to create the environment where the winners will emerge because they are efficient, while the government should concentrate on improving the policy environment and addressing constraints in infrastructure, banking sector and capital markets," he said.

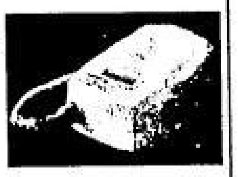
Crouch said the strategy of the government picking winners was a "dangerous" way.

Jesus Felipe, ADB principal economist, said that while the services sector has become important in terms of both output and employment, the sector remained "polarized" and "low in productivity."

"The development and contribution of services should be acknowledged but without industrialization, there will be no fast growth," Felipe said.

In order to catch up with the fast-growing Asian region, he said the Philippine economy must be transformed so that resources would veer toward higher value-added sectors, exports should consist of a more sophisticated range of products and labor productivity must be increased, he said.

In the 1970s to 1980s, Felipe noted that the Philippines ranked only next to Japan as the most progressive among Asian economies. However, he said "misguided" government intervention as well as a monetary policy which caused interest rates to shoot up dampened the domestic manufacturing sector.



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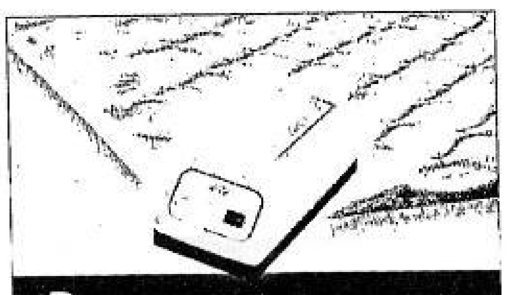

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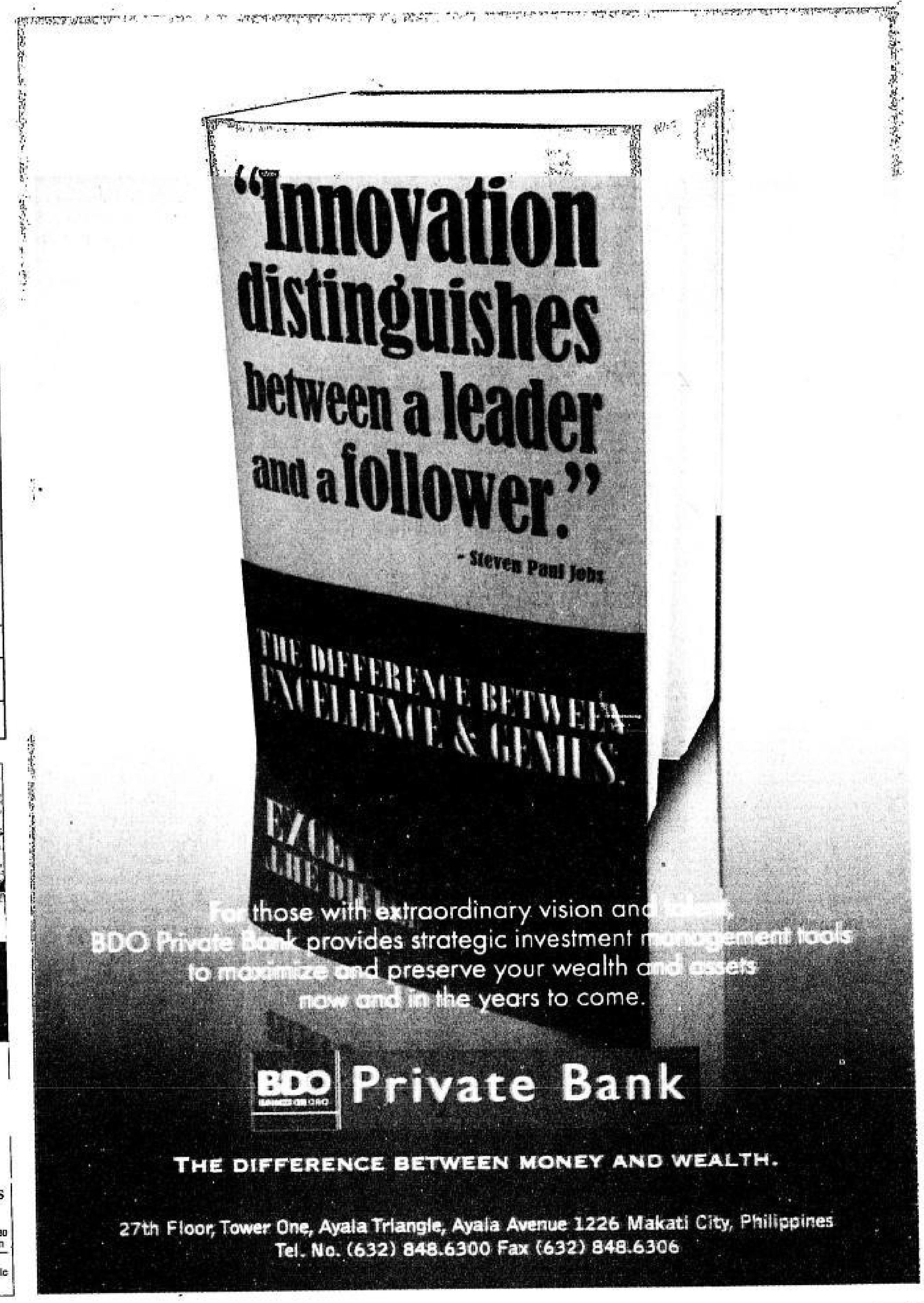
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RP posted trade surplus of $272M in January

Exports grew by 21.8% while imports inched up by 1%

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY REGISTERED A TRADE SURplus of $272 million in January as merchandise exports grew at its strongest rate in seven years, outpacing the growth in imports in the same period.

The National Statistics Office yesterday said this was a reversal of the trade deficit posted in the same period last year. The export growth in January was fueled by the increase in shipments to the United States, Japan, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Netherlands, Germany and Malaysia.

Export earnings went up by 21.8 percent to $3.99 billion in January from year-ago level.

In the same month, imports grew by only 1 percent to $3.71 billion from year-ago level. This reversed the 1.3-percent contraction in December but was slower than the 5 percent growth in January last year.

As the country's top exports heavily use imported inputs, the growth in imports is considered an indicator of how Philippine exports will fare in the months ahead. A slowdown in imports is seen as a signal of local producers' anticipation of weaker demand in export markets.

But based on the NSO report, payments for raw materials and intermediate goods, which accounted for 46.1 percent of total imports, went up by 12 percent to $1.71 billion from year ago.

Capital goods, which accounted for 32 percent of the total imports, also grew by 6.3 percent year-on-year, to $1.19 billion from $1.12 billion in January 2006. Telecommunication equipment and electrical machinery imports, considered capital goods, amounted to $638.14 million, accounting for 17.2 percent of total imports in January 2007.

Purchases of mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials (with a share of 13.1 percent of the total bill) decreased by 29.6 percent to $486.25 million over a year ago while importation of consumer goods also declined by 4.9 percent to $259.87 million.

By type of goods, electronic products accounted for the bulk at 47.4 percent of the total imports.

The United States remained the country's biggest source of imports for January 2007, accounting for 15-percent share of the total import bill. The amount of goods imported from the United States, however, declined by 7.8 percent to $555.52 million in January 2007 from $602.48 million in the same month last year. Exports to the US amounted to $695.56 million, yielding a two-way trade value of $1.25 billion and a trade surplus for the Philippines of $140.03 million.

Singapore dislodged Japan as the second biggest source of imports for January with a 13.7 percent share. Imports from this Asean country during the month covered amounted to $509.86 million, up by 45.5 percent from year ago. Export earnings from Singapore reached $267.63 million, resulting in a $242.23-million deficit for the Philippines.

Japan came in third, accounting for 11.6 percent of the total import bill, down by 12.3 percent to $431.53 million from $492.25 million in the same month in 2006. Exports to Japan amounted to $606.87 million resulting in a trade surplus of P175.34 million for the Philippines.

Other major sources of imports for January were Taiwan ($293.13 million); People's Republic of China ($277.29 million); Republic of Korea ($235.81 million); Malaysia, ($171.81 million), and Hong Kong ($168.31 million).

Namfrel's count: Quicker than quick

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

FINALLY, THE COMMISSION ON Elections (Comelec) has authorized the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) to make the so-called quick count of the results of next May's elections.

The idea of a quick count is brilliant. The candidate who wants to steal his election delays the official publication of the voting results for as long as possible to allow him to massage the final outcome. The crooked candidate does not work under a lighted lamppost; he works in the dark.

If Namfrel can come out with credible results without much delay, even if unofficial, election fraud becomes more difficult, if not impossible. This is the basic objective of the quick count.

But, after operating in something like 16 elections and referenda, Namfrel came under disrepute. The quick count was no longer all that quick; in fact, Namfrel took weeks to come out with the count. Namfrel was accused of bias in counting the certificates of canvass at its national headquarters. This bias showed that favored candidates were ahead in the count. This "trending" was unfair, critics said.

That Jose Concepcion, Namfrel's longtime head, is the *barangay* captain in Forbes Park has also been an issue. JoeCon has now graciously, if a bit grudgingly, agreed to let go the reins of Namfrel.

But, Namfrel has got to regain its credibility. The best way to do this is for Namfrel to finish its quick count within 24 hours from the close of the voting precincts; that is, by about 10 p.m. of May 15. Through this 24-hour window, there is little time for human bias.

More important, if Namfrel can come out with a complete quick count within 24 hours from the close of the voting precincts, the dreaded *dagdag-bawas* scam will be bypassed and prevented.

I discussed this 24-hour window with a friend of mine, the Filipino genius who set up the national ID system in Singapore. He says that Namfrel has to have the computer network to be able to send all the data in the certificates of canvas (COC) electronically, in seconds, to the central headquarters in Manila. Please note: To send to national headquarters, not the COC itself, but all the data in the COC. The COC itself will serve as the back-up hard copy.

For example, in Bel-Air Makati where I vote, there are 32 voting precincts. A computer, with a scanner, can be installed in one of the small rooms in the *barangay* hall. As the Namfrel volunteer gets his copy of the COC, he brings it to the computer room. The scanner sends electronically in seconds the data in the COC to the national headquarters where the master computer catches all the data nationwide.

Namfrel may have to coordinate with the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) in places that may not be covered by Namfrel volunteers.

Where will Namfrel get all those computers? There are a lot of Filipinos of goodwill all over the archipelago who would be more than happy to lend their computers and scanners.

With the least human intervention, the computers will do the quick counting. The results can be displayed on national TV—and the CNN and BBC—for the whole world to see by 10 p.m. of May 15.

Nowadays, billions of money are transported electronically around the world. Why not COCs, my friend asks.

Can a virus wreck the computer network? Not if a so-called firewall is built to protect it.

Namfrel has to completely restructure itself electronically. The computer will have to be the star of the show. We can call it The New Namfrel.

OSRAM

Energy-saving lamps to replace incandescent light bulbs in developing and emerging countries
UN approval for a globally unique OSRAM model for reducing CO_2 in lighting applications

OSRAM is the world's first lighting manufacturer to receive approval from the United Nations for a "Clean Development Mechanism" (CDM) for reducing CO_2 emissions. This sustainable methodology based on the Kyoto Protocol will enable many millions of incandescent light bulbs to be directly replaced by energy-saving lamps over the next few years in developing and emerging countries mainly in Africa and Asia. It will then be possible to trade the CO_2 certificates obtained in this way. "OSRAM is sending out a clear and practical signal with regard to climate protection", said Franzjosef Schafhausen, Head of Division, environment and energy issues, climate policy in the German Federal Environment Ministry.

It was three years ago that OSRAM launched the project. With the recent approval the CDM methodology for measuring the CO_2 emissions produced by energy-saving lamps in households has now been officially sanctioned and is therefore publicly available for any interested company or organization. "With the CDM method that we have developed we are making an active contribution to climate protection. It will lead to an appreciable reduction in CO_2 emissions, help developing and emerging countries to keep their energy needs at low levels and save consumers in these countries their hard-earned cash. It is an ecologically valuable and economically sensible model", said Martin Goetzeler, President and CEO of OSRAM.

Incandescent lamps are the most widely sold products on the worldwide lighting market, at around 12.5 billion units. Each incandescent lamp replaced means around half a tonne less of CO_2, averaged throughout the world. "We therefore invite all lighting manufacturers to adopt our method and promote further energy-saving lighting solutions together," said Goetzeler. OSRAM is already working on initial projects in developing countries. Since the individual CDM projects are designed to run for 10 years and the lamps should not be replaced in this period, the most durable energy-saving lamps from OSRAM, namely OSRAM Dulux Longlife lamps, are used here.

No costs planned for end consumers/refinancing through CO_2 certificates

To implement its approved method, OSRAM will enter into local cooperation agreements, for example with power supply companies or energy agencies. The plan is for the costs for the new energy-saving lamps to be borne by OSRAM and its partners. This is because the target group comprises households that could not normally otherwise afford to buy energy-saving lamps. The tools for refinancing this investment are the CO_2 certificates generated from the CDM project. In the implementation projects currently planned by OSRAM the replacements are intended to be at zero cost. There is even a financial benefit for the new users of energy-saving lamps in the form of savings in electricity consumption of up to 80 percent. Developing and emerging countries will also be in a better position to control their energy demands thanks to millions of energy-saving lamps. There is a further positive effect for the CO_2 balance because these countries often have to rely on coal and oil as their primary energy sources.

Background: Clean Development Mechanism
The Clean Development Mechanism is part of the Kyoto Protocol, which many countries have signed as an indication of their commitment to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. CDMs enable industrialized nations that are committed to reducing greenhouse gases to make these reductions also in developing and emerging countries that do not have targets for reducing emissions.

Certificates will be produced for the carbon dioxide saved. These certificates can be bought and sold as part of emission trading. There is a flourishing market for these CO_2 certificates. The certificates also constitute an exciting business model. Once approved by the United Nations, CDMs are public and can be freely used.

Background: energy saving lamps
Energy-efficient products have always been and will continue to be a central component of the global research and product development activities and corporate strategy of OSRAM. OSRAM has always been a trendsetter. In 1985, for example, the company invented the energy-saving lamp with integrated electronic control gear.

Energy-saving lamps consume up to 80% less electricity than ordinary light bulbs for the same amount of light and last up to 15 times longer. An ordinary light bulb will burn on average for only 1000 hours. And it converts 95% of the energy it consumes into heat and only 5% into light. Over its life of up to 15 years an OSRAM Longlife energy-saving lamp will save about one megawatt-hour (MWh) of electricity and around half a tonne of CO_2 emissions.

Other energy-saving lamps
In the summer OSRAM will be launching energy-saving halogen lamps – giving consumers even more choice. These lamps produce brilliant light typical of halogen lamps but can be dimmed without restriction. They last twice as long as incandescent lamps and achieve energy savings of 30%. There is also enormous potential for energy savings in the commercial and industrial sectors, for example with regard to fluorescent lamps: Simply replacing conventional fluorescent lamps with intelligent energy-saving systems could save around 320 million MWh and 160 million tonnes of CO_2 emissions worldwide each year. This corresponds to the CO_2 emissions of all the vehicles registered in Germany.

About the company
OSRAM is one of the two leading lighting manufacturers in the world. Sales in the year ending September 30, 2006 totalled 4.6 billion euros, 88 percent of which came from outside Germany. OSRAM is a high-tech company in the lighting sector. Around 40 percent of sales comes from innovative products. This global player employs more than 40,000 people worldwide, supplies customers in some 150 countries and has 49 production facilities in 18 countries.

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Office of the President
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Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
Republic of the Philippines

Re-Bidding for the Contract for the Construction of Ramps in Tarlac

The Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), through the BCDA 2007 Corporate Funds, intends to apply the sum of **One Hundred Million One Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Four and 75/100 (P100,001,254.75)** for the projects listed hereunder, being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The Services shall be for the Contract for the Construction of Ramps/Approaches in Tarlac. The works shall include, but not limited to the following:

Construction of Ramps/Approaches for the following overpasses in Tarlac:
- Tinang Overpass
- Sto. Nino Overpass
- Pitabunan Overpass
- Mabilog Overpass- Luisita I
- Pando Overpass – Luisita II
- Ligaya II Overpass
- Ligaya III Overpass (Maligaya) and
- Sta. Maria Overpass

BCDA now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the bidding for Construction of the aforecited Project. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, **at least A, Medium B**, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Applicants must submit their LOIs during the issuance date of Eligibility documents **on April 03-13, 2007 only** and obtain the Application for Eligibility and to Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: Twenty Thousand (P20,000.00)** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. A **Pre-Eligibility Conference** open to all who secured the eligibility documents will be held **on 16 April 2007, Monday at 3:30 p.m.**

The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on: **23 April 2007, Monday at 11:00 a.m.** and the Opening of Eligibility Documents **at 1:30 p.m of the same date** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. **Late submission of Eligibility Documents shall be accepted only for recording purposes but will not be considered and will be returned unopened.** Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (RA 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened, and the contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from BCDA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below **from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on April 03-13, 2007.**

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the SBAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: Fifty Thousand (P50,000.00)**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the Bidder or his authorized representative **from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on April 27-May 02, 2007.**

BCDA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on **07 May 2007, Monday, 2:00PM** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City.

Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before **11:00 a.m. of 21 May 2007** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form:

a. Cash, managers check, cashiers' check, irrevocable letter of credit, or bank draft – one percent (1%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.
b. Bank Guarantee – one and a half percent (1½ %) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.
c. Surety Bond from a reputable insurance company accredited by the Insurance Commission – two and a half percent (2½ %) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.

Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on **21 May 2007 at 1:30 p.m.** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below on the same day.

Completion of the Works is required by a total of **One Hundred Fifty (150) calendar days.**

BCDA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Further information may be obtained from Ms. Nancy Paje, of SBAC Secretariat.

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(Sgd.) **VICTOR V. ZABLAN**
Chairman
Special Bids and Award Committee (SBAC)

(PDI–March 28 & April 3, 2007)

ALI, Manila Jockey to put up BPO facility

Joint venture eyes 2 office buildings

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PROPERTY FIRM AYALA LAND INC. AND racetrack developer Manila Jockey Club have teamed up to build facilities for business process outsourcing firms on a 1.1-ha property in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

In joint disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Manila Jockey and ALI said they had agreed on the principal terms of the proposed office project on a property that formed part of the San Lazaro racetrack in Manila.

The project will consist of two office buildings with leasable area of 40,000 sq. m.

The two firms have agreed to execute definitive agreements to implement the project within 60 days subject to the fulfillment of certain conditions.

As part of the initial agreement, ALI will conduct a due diligence on the property.

Details of the project have yet to be announced.

In 2005, Manila Jockey tied up with ALI and its subsidiaries, Avida Land Corp. and Community Innovations Inc., for the development of two prime housing communities—Avida Towers San Lazaro and Celadon Residences San Lazaro—in the area.

Avida Towers is envisioned to be a cluster of five condominium towers while Celadon Residences is a 200-unit Mediterranean-inspired townhouse community on a 4.2-ha land.

ALI, through ALI Property Partners Corp., is readying a war chest of P10 billion in the next three years for large scale projects that will help close the supply gap for office spaces catering to BPO firms.

In an earlier interview, APPCO president Marivic Añonuevo said the bulk of the investments would go to Dela Rosa E-Services Building, the maiden project of APPCO (P4 billion) in Makati, and to the University of the Philippines (UP) North Science and Technology Park (P6 billion) in Quezon City.

P121-M Bataan oil depot OKd

By Ronnel W. Domingo

AN ALL-FILIPINO COMPANY, BATAAN Petroleum Terminal Inc., is putting up a P121-million oil depot in Limay, Bataan to serve the storage needs of its affiliates.

The Board of Investments said it had approved the registration of and granting of tax incentives to the company for the project, which was covered by the mandatory inclusion in the 2006 Investment Priorities Plan.

Republic Act No. 8479 or the Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Law qualifies projects involving the refining, storage, marketing and distribution of petroleum products for incentives under the IPP.

Under the law, the company is entitled to perks for up to five years, including tax holiday, duty-free importation of capital goods and other fiscal and nonfiscal incentives.

The facility will serve the requirements of Bataan Petroleum affiliates, Andan Enterprises and Mawab Resources.

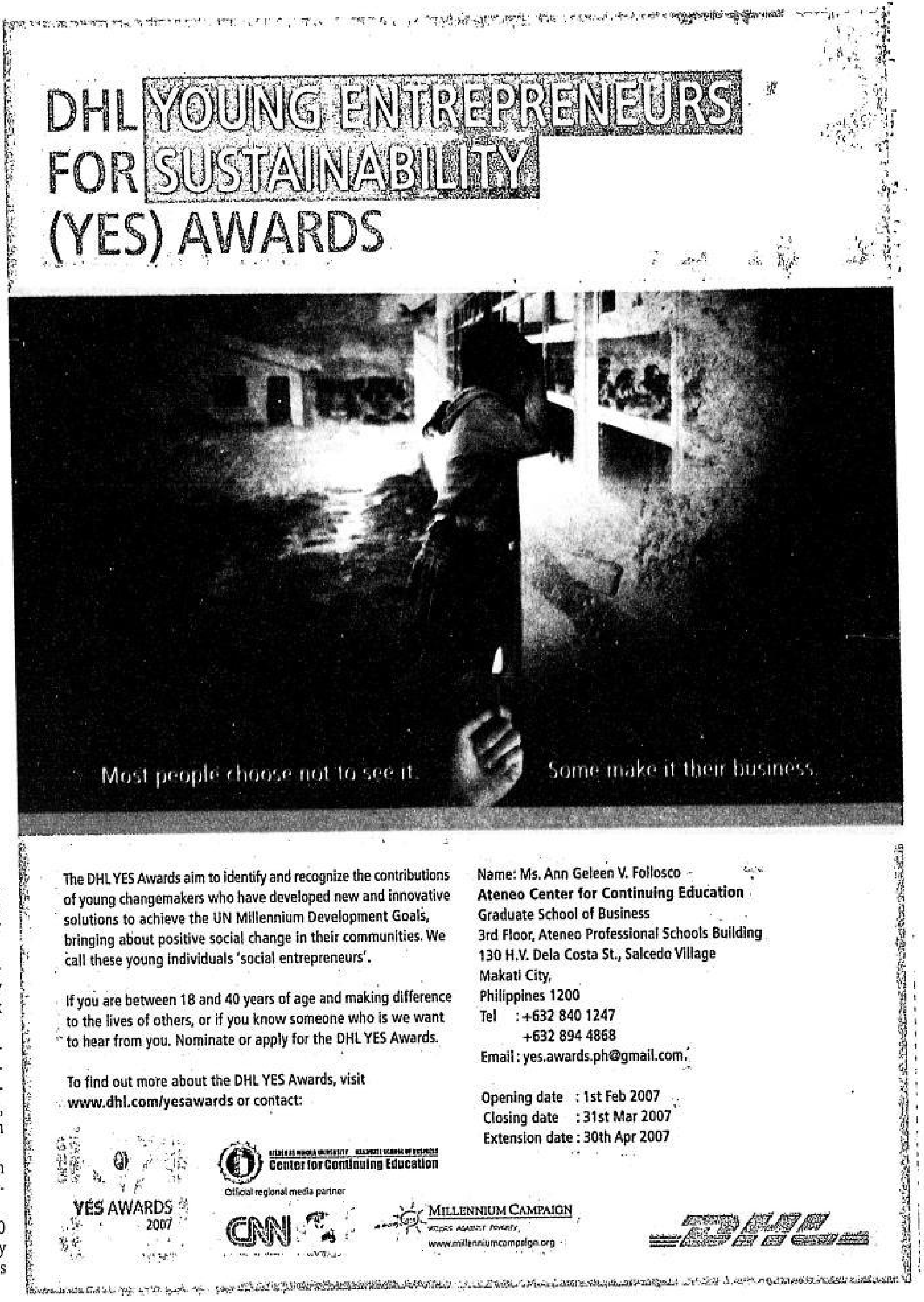
Andan Enterprises, based in Malolos, Bulacan, is a hauler of petroleum products, while Mawab Resources is a wholesaler and retailer of these products.

The Limay facility will have an initial capacity of 10 million liters, which the company plans to expand to 30 million liters in six months.

Bataan Petroleum builds up on the achievements of Mawab Resources, whose initial success as a new industry entrant enabled it to establish a chain of petroleum retail outlets, with the first one being launched in 1999 in Taguig City.

From its initial sales of P114 million in 2001, Mawab Resources now generates a revenue of almost P2.8 billion a year.

MRI now has a major network of 150 clients nationwide, which are located mostly in Metro Manila and in the outskirt provinces of Luzon.



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Option 1 Buy your Pinoy Genuine Kit from participating Elite, Advanced Volume License Resellers and FG Distributors** who will order it online for you.
Option 2 Buy direct online using your credit card. Major credit cards like Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Diners are accepted.

3 GET YOUR KIT—WE'LL SHIP IT FOR FREE. No need to worry about shipping, handling and duties. Your genuine license is on its way to your doorstep! What's more? Every purchase earns you a raffle coupon for exciting prizes like a home theater system, O2 PDAs, desktop PCs, Xbox 360 game consoles, Canon digital cameras and HP printers!

Send as many entries as you can for more chances of winning!
Raffle coupons will be issued by resellers for direct purchases, or via mail for online purchases.

* Regular SRP is US$400. Peso price converted using PhP51:US$1 for estimate purposes only. Actual exchange rate will be based on the rate used by the credit card issuer on the date of transaction.
** Local taxes may apply.

For inquiries, call the Microsoft Hotline at (632) 672 7230 or e-mail mmph@microsoft.com
See posters or visit www.microsoft.com/philippines/genuine for full mechanics.

List of Elite, Advanced Volume License Microsoft Resellers and FG Distibutors

Elite Volume License Resellers • **MAKATI** • CTLink Systems, Inc. (632) 893-9515 • Micro Gold (632) 889-2800 • Micro Pacific Technologies & Systems Corporation (632) 840-4563 • Microbase, Inc. (632) 813-7603 • Microgenesis Business Systems (632) 892-4447 • Microphase Enterprise Company (632) 812-8814 • **MANILA** • Columbia Technologies (632) 524-0393 • Creative Technologies (632) 400-4222 • Mediasoft Technologies Corporation (632) 242-0733 • **PASIG** • Accent Micro Technologies, Inc. (632) 636-3563 • **QUEZON CITY** • Northgate Technologies, Inc. (632) 844-6477 • Zenshin Systems Corporation (632) 365-0536 • **CEBU** • Ng Khai Development Corporation (6332) 346-2926

Advanced Volume License Resellers • **MAKATI** • Challenge Systems (632) 892-3779 • Gemora Electronic Marketing & Services (632) 895-9812 • Imerge (632) 899-5995 • Information Products Corporation (632) 895-3436 • Infoworx (632) 898-3354 • Makati Microshop (632) 817-9353 • Maximum Solutions Corporation (632) 899-8018 • Microimage (632) 752-4525 • MISNET (632) 793-7124 • Mobius Info Solutions, Inc. (632) 893-5108 • Netmarks (632) 687-5111 • Personal Computer Specialists, Inc. (632) 819-5106 • Productivity Technologies Services, Inc. (632) 897-0877 • Questronix Corporation (632) 857-7300 • Right Computer Systems, Inc. (632) 813-7501 • SIM Computer (632) 896-0170 • **MALABON** • Machine & Computer World, Inc. (632) 363-0167 • **MANDALUYONG** • Datacare Service Center (632) 532-0830 • S & S Corporation (632) 722-7481 • **MANILA** • Advance Solution (632) 526-4130 • Hytech (632) 723-5878 • Systemtech (632) 309-2700 • Total Quality Machines (632) 536-3241 • **PARANAQUE** • A.S. Computers (632) 827-8272 • **PASIG** • Advance Microsystems (632) 635-4181 • Axus International (632) 687-6500 • Comgate Systems Technology (632) 635-4804 • Flexy Components (632) 687-1809 • **QUEZON CITY** • ATP Peripherals (632) 636-8069 • Fastlink (632) 413-9396 • New Comlogik Business Systems (632) 952-2589 • Unison (632) 374-5888 • **SAN JUAN** • Integrated Computer Systems (632) 727-3801 • Virtuality (632) 727-7632 • **PAMPANGA** • Enigma (6345) 888-1994 • **CEBU** • Thinking Tools (6332) 254-2227

FG Distributors • **MAKATI** • ACW Distribution (632) 892-6582 • Wordtext Systems, Inc. (WSI) (632) 751-4255

This promo is exclusive to the Philippines from March 19 to May 25, 2007 ONLY!

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1116, Series of 2007.

Pancake House to venture overseas, forms international unit

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

CASUAL DINING RESTAURANT chain Pancake House said it would form a wholly owned subsidiary—Pancake House International—to handle its ventures overseas.

Pancake House made the disclosure yesterday after its board approved the plan to bring its restaurant concepts to foreign markets.

Pancake House operates the Pancake House chain, and also controls Dencio's bar and grill and Japanese fast food chain Teriyaki Boy.

Pancake House, however, did not give further details on its planned international expansion.

Pancake House has also secured board approval to borrow P150 million from the Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company—with First Metro Investment Corp., Metrobank's investment banking arm, acting as the arranger of the loan.

The proceeds of the loan will be used to pay the company's term loan of the same amount with Metrobank.

Pancake House reported that its net income from January to September last year soared 67 percent to P23.1 million from P13.8 million in the same period in 2005, pushed by revenues generated by its core restaurant brand—Pancake House.

In an earlier financial report filed with the Philippine Stock Exchange, Pancake said nine-month profits were bolstered by "Pancake House," its flagship restaurant line, which booked P23.8 million in profit, slightly down from P28.4 million in the same period the previous year.

This was due to the increase in expenses on loan interest.

Dencio's, on the other hand, improved its performance, with losses now cut dramatically by as much as 66 percent to P5 million in the nine-month period last year from P14.6 million the previous year.

Teriyaki Boy, on the other hand, contributed P5.6 million during the nine-month period, despite starting operations only in the last quarter of 2005.

Pancake House's consolidated revenues grew 89 percent to P995.7 million from January to September last year year from P527.4 million in 2005.

Of this number, restaurant sales accounted for the bulk of revenues, surging 119 percent to P683.5 million in the nine-month period from P312.7 million in 2005.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
CONNECT88 INC. 28/F Yuchengco Tower I, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Ximei Wu	Technical Staff
CONNECT88 INC. 28/F Yuchengco Tower I, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Bo Li	Technical Staff
YEFONG MARKETING CORP. 83 Karuhatan Rd., Karuhatan, Valenzuela City	Chi-Wei Lin	Assistant Operations Manager
FOR FELLAS PHILIPPINES INC. Unit A&B, 11/F Cyber One Bldg., Eastwood Cyberpark, Libis, Quezon City	Yasuo Idetsu	President
NEW CONCEPT MANDARIN PHILIPPINES INCORPORATED Lots 2&3 Block 1 BV Romero Blvd., Manila Harbour Center, Radial Rd. 10 Vitas, Tondo, Manila	Chunyu Pang	Instructor (Full Time)
SUZHOU DIMSUM CORP. 1715 A. Mabini St., Ermita, Manila	Huian Zhao	Branch Chief Chef
SUZHOU DIMSUM CORP. 1715 A. Mabini St., Ermita, Manila	Rujie Zhou	Branch Chief Chef
SUZHOU DIMSUM CORP. 1715 A. Mabini St., Ermita, Manila	Bin Hou	Branch Chief Chef
SUZHOU DIMSUM CORP. 1715 A. Mabini St., Ermita, Manila	Yongbiao Ji	Branch Chief Chef
GOLD STAR MOTOR CORPORATION 108 Wilson Circle, Wilson St., Brgy. Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila	Hyeong Min Woo	Marketing Consultant
MELVEST MARINE INC. Rm. 304 Jade Centre Bldg., 105 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City	Andrew Richmond Johnson	General Manager
GROUP STARR SERVICES FOUNDATION, INC. Unit 704 Park House II Bldg., #21 EDSA Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City	Luiz Tadayoshi Kawabata	President
SHINNITTETSU PHILIPPINES BRANCH Unit 1505 Herrera Tower, 98 Herrera St. cor. Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Takao Hayashi	Fabrication Manager
NISHIMATSU CONSTRUCTION CO., LTD. 5/F First Life Center, 174 Salcedo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Justin James Wright	Consultant
SYKES ASIA, INC. 26/F Robinsons Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Jun Kim	Korean Client Support
SIEMENS, INC. 17/F Salcedo Tower, 169 H.V. dela Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Adrian Kenneth Frank Wood	President, Chief Executive Officer and Member of the Board of Directors
SIEMENS, INC. 17/F Salcedo Tower, 169 H.V. dela Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Carsten Metelmann	Business Development Manager
EROM PHILIPPINES INC. 29 Pres. Ave., Brgy. BF Homes, Parañaque City	Hak Bae Kim	General Manager
NEW COAST HOTEL INC. (HYATT HOTEL AND CASINO MANILA) 1588 Pedro Gil cor. M.H. del Pilar, Malate, Manila	Yujiro Matsukawa	Trainee, Concierge Department
KEPCO PHILIPPINES CORPORATION 18/F Citibank Tower, 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Salcedo Village, Makati City	Yoonyoung Lee	Manager, Procurement Department
JIN THAI ASSOCIATES CO., INC. Rm. 801 Standford Tower, M.H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila	Tingting Wang	Executive Assistant
AVENUE ASIA INVESTMENTS MANAGEMENT, LLC Units 1115-1116 Ayala Tower I and Exchange Plaza, Ayala Triangle, Ayala Ave. cor. Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Kaili Adia Walker	Analyst
AVENUE ASIA INVESTMENTS MANAGEMENT, LLC Units 1115-1116 Ayala Tower I and Exchange Plaza, Ayala Triangle, Ayala Ave. cor. Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Renita Nicole Canady	Analyst
WONDERPHIL CONSULTANT CORP. Unit F 7/F, Westgate Tower, Investment Drive, Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Pilsoo Kim	Head Supervisor

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

The Department of Labor and Employment will launch a special project entitled "DOLE-PESO Rotary International 3830-Philhealth on Social Protection for Kasambahay" today, March 28, 2007.

(PDI—March 28, 2007)

2-yr treasury bond yield eases

Interest down to 5.157% due to benign inflation

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE AVERAGE YIELD ON THE government's two-year treasury bond dipped yesterday as the cash-rich money market took its cue from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' favorable outlook on inflation.

During the auction by the Bureau of the Treasury yesterday, the average yield on the two-year bond eased to 5.157 percent from the 5.433 percent pegged last January 30.

The P7-billion offering was about two times oversubscribed, with banks' tenders reaching over P14 billion.

Banco de Oro Universal Bank chief strategist Jonathan Ravelas said the rate decline was brought about by the BSP's view that domestic liquidity was not a concern.

"With the stable outlook on inflation, the outlook on interest rate is it will either be stable or even go down," Ravelas said.

For the 17th straight month, the BSP's policy-making Monetary Board kept overnight borrowing rate at 7.5 percent and the overnight lending rate at 9.75 percent during its March policy rate setting.

But while it was "neutral" on the overnight borrowing rate, the BSP remains open to using tools outside the overnight borrowing or lending (reverse repurchase and repurchase agreements) to finetune monetary policy.

It was earlier reported that the BSP was drafting new monetary tools to make its open market operations more effective, especially with the strong growth in money supply with the infusion of money from abroad such remittances.

The BSP currently uses an inflation-targeting framework for monetary policy, which focuses mainly on keeping prices of basic goods stable.

This means that the BSP will do what is necessary to meet its official inflation target.

Last November, for instance, the BSP effectively cut rates with the revival of a three-tiered rate on its overnight borrowing.

Under this system, only the first P5 billion of short-term money placed with the BSP will be paid the overnight borrowing rate (currently at 7.5 percent).

The next P5 billion will get a yield of 200 basis points below the published rate (5.5 percent), while placements in excess of P10 billion will get 400 basis points less (3.5 percent).

Monetary authorities have said the revival of the tiered rate on overnight borrowing was "temporary" and that monetary settings would not be allowed to become "too easy" or "too tight."

The IMF estimated that the effective monetary easing, or decline in rates, caused by the tiering was about 200 basis points.

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 528-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget
553 Pcs. 14K Gold Ring	P7,797,300.00

The Bid Documents will be available at the Procurement Department at the 28th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar cor. Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila starting March 28, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable fee of P3,900.00.

The Pre-Bid Conference will be held at Procurement Department Conference Room at 10:00 AM, April 12, 2007. Bidding for the above requirement is scheduled on April 26, 2007 at 1:00 PM.

Please address your queries to the Head-Secretariat, Bids and Awards Committee, or call 405-7370; 551-0000 locals 2290 & 2293.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

(PDI - March 28, 2007)

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Philippine Sugar Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (02) 454-0264 • Website: www.nfa.gov.ph

March 26, 2007

ANNOUNCEMENT

TO : All Rice Based Farmers' Organizations (FOS) and All Other Sectors/ Private Grains Businessmen (Individuals and Entities) Interested to Participate in the Rice Importation Program for 2007

In view of the increasing world market prices and the minimal rice importation of the private sector, the National Food Authority (NFA) Council, during its meeting last March 21, 2007, has authorized the NFA to import the following:

1. 96,000 MT from the country specific quota of Thailand referred to under Memorandum Circular No. AO-2K6-11-003.
2. 50,000 MT from the private sector rice importation allocation of 350,000 MT referred to under Memorandum Circular AO-2K6-11-004.

For your information.

(Sgd.) JESSUP P. NAVARRO
Administrator

(PDI - March 28, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
PhilHealth Regional Office I
#23 M.H. del Pilar Street, Dagupan City 2400
PRO Healthline: (075) 515-3333, (075) 515-1111

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

ACQUISITION OF SECURITY SERVICES & DRIVER/GUARDS FOR *PRO1*

Corporate Budget for 2007

1. The *Philippine Health Insurance Corporation*, through the *Corporate Budget for the year 2007* intends to apply the sum of ***TWO MILLION FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN THOUSAND PESOS (Php 2,413,000.00)*** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for *ITB 2007-002*. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The *PhilHealth Regional Office 1 now* invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the ***acquisition of security services & driver/guards for PRO1***. Delivery of the GOODS is required ***fifteen (15) calendar days from*** *receipt of Notice of Award*. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from *PhilHealth Regional Office 1* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from *Mondays thru Fridays, 8A.M.-5P.M.*
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of *TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (Php 2,500.00)*. The method of payment will be *cash or cheque*. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The *PhilHealth Regional Office 1 will* hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on ***April 18, 2007, Wednesday, 9:30AM*** at *Esperacion Bldg II., #23 M.H. Del Pilar St., Dagupan City, Pangasinan 2400.*
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before ***May 2, 2007, Wednesday 1:30PM***. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of a *Bidder's Bond in Cash, Manager's Check, Cashier's Check, certified check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit, bank guarantee, surety bond callable on demand issued by the Government Service Insurance System, or by surety or insurance companies duly accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner, a combination of the foregoing or a foreign government guarantee as provided in an executive, bilateral or multilateral agreement, as may be required by the head of the procuring entity concerned.* ***Any surety or insurance company which is duly accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner will do, provided that it is not blacklisted by the said agency.*** *The Bid Security shall be equivalent to the following percentages of the approved budget for the contract to be bid: one percent (1%) if cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit; one and a half percent (1.5%) if bank guarantee; and two and a half (2.5%) if surety bond. The required minimum bid security, based on the above schedule, shall be stated in Philippine Peso in the bidding document. Bid securities shall be returned only after the bidder with the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bid has signed the contract and furnished the Performance Security, but in no case later than the expiration of the bid security validity period indicated in the Instructions to Bidders.*

The required amount of the above forms of security shall be in accordance with the following schedule:

Forms of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%) [P24,130.00]
Bank guarantee	One and a half percent (1.5%) [P36,195.00]
Surety Bond	Two and a half percent (2.5%) [P60,325.00]

Performance Security. *To guarantee the faithful performance by the winning bidder of its obligations under the contract prepared in accordance with the bidding document, it shall post a Performance Security upon the signing of the contract. The Performance Security may be in the following forms: cash, certified check, cashier's / manager's check, bank draft / guarantee confirmed by a reputable local bank or in the case of a foreign winning bidder, bonded by a foreign bank; irrevocable letter of credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable letter of credit issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed or authenticated by a reputable local bank; surety bond callable upon demand issued by any reputable surety or insurance company; a combination of the foregoing; or a foreign government guarantee as provided in an executive, bilateral or multilateral agreement, as may be required by the head of the procuring entity concerned.*

The required amount of the above forms of security shall be in accordance with the following schedule:

Forms of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Total Contract Price
Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	Five percent (5%)
Bank guarantee	Ten percent (10%)
Surety Bond	Thirty percent (30%)

Late Bids shall not be accepted.

8. Bid opening shall be on ***May 2, 2007, Wednesday 1:30PM*** at *Esperacion Bldg II.,#23 M.H. Del Pilar St., Dagupan City, Pangasinan 2400.* Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. ***NO BIDDER SHALL CONTACT THE BAC OR TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP FROM THE TIME OF THE BID OPENING TO THE TIME THE CONTRACT IS AWARDED.*** Any effort by the Bidder to influence the BAC in its evaluation, bid comparison or contract award decision shall result in the rejection of the bid, forfeiture of the bid bonds, disqualification of the Bidder in this bidding or blacklisting of the Bidder in any future bidding of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation.
10. The *PhilHealth Regional Office 1 reserves* the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

PhilHealth Regional Office 1
Dr. MARICAR M. ARZADON – BAC Chairperson
Esperacion Bldg II.,#23 M.H. Del Pilar St.,
Dagupan City, Pangasinan 2400
Trunkline: (075)515-3333 local 141-142, 127, 197
lpu.pro1@philhealth.gov.ph
Telefax: (075) 515-6237

(Sgd.)Dr. MARICAR M. ARZADON
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - March 21 & 28, 2007)

Aboitiz group merges logistics units

By Riza T. Olchondra

SHAREHOLDERS OF Aboitiz Transport Systems Corp. have approved the plan to merge two of its units to solidify the group's supply chain management operations.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, ATS said it was decided at the special stockholder's meeting of Aboitiz One Inc. (Aone) that the unit be merged with another ATS subsidiary, Aboitiz Logistics Inc. (ALI). Aone will be the surviving corporation.

Through Aone's various subsidiaries and affiliates, it provides total logistics solutions to its customers via air, land and sea.

ALI, meanwhile, provides various supply chain management and logistics services, such as freight forwarding, and container yard management.

Operating as part of an integrated, unified Aone group, ALI will focus on providing logistics solutions to major importers requiring national distribution, as well as major exporters requiring global distribution.

Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc.
(ZAMCELCO)
Putik, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Putik, this city per requisite under Board Policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards, invites ALL interested Bidders/Suppliers to bid for the supply of the following electrical materials/equipment/items, to wit:

ITEM	QTY	UNIT	DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS
1	1	unit	Repair and rewinding of Power Transformer rated 21 Mva, 67/13.2/7.62 Kv., 60Hz, 3Phase, Class OA/FA1/FA2 OLTC at Secondary and NLTC at the primary side., Allis Chalmer brand with champered main tank cover. Note: 1. Estimated price includes the 12% VAT from the date of receipt of the Job Order 2. Conversion from dead tank to conservator type 3. Conversion from Champered to Bolted type top cover 4. The contractor shall be responsible to transfer the unit from San Jose Gusu substation to Load Center lot substation 5. Final assembly, testing and commissioning shall be at the Load Center lot substation site 6. See attached scope of work NOTHING FOLLOWS AGENCY PRICE P 6,500,000.00

SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE REPAIR OF 21 MVA POWER TRANSFORMER AT GUSU SUBSTATION

A.	MOBILIZATION
A.1	Contractor shall provide the following:
A.1.1	Nitrogen gas for storage filling
A.1.2	Oxy/acetylene outfit and tanks
A.1.3	Tools and special test equipment
B.	LIFTING OF CORE/WINDING COIL ASSEMBLY
B.1	Lifting of core / winding coil assembly
B.2	Removal of power transformer main tank
B.3	Lowering of Core / winding coil assembly
C.	REFERENCE TEST DATA
C.1	Prepare the actual connection diagram of the power transformer
C.2	Conduct preliminary reference test data
C.2.1	Insulation resistance test
C.2.2	Primary winding resistance test
C.2.3	Secondary winding resistance test
C.2.4	Contact resistance test of On load tap changer per tap position
C.2.5	Transformer turn ratio test at normal tap position
D.	DISMANTLING OF POWER TRANSFORMER PARTS
D.1	Removal of main tank top cover and its attachment
D.2	Removal of Tap changer assembly
D.3	Removal of core attachment
D.4	Removal of three (3) Phase winding coil
E.	RECONDITIONING OF POWER TRANSFORMER COMPONENT
E.1	Replacement of insulation of Phase A and B winding coil
E.2	High and low tap changer assembly
E.3	Pressure relief valve assembly
F.	REWINDING OF PHASE B WINDING COIL
G.	OIL FILLING THROUGH FILTRATION MACHINE
G.1	Transformer oil flushing and baking of main tank and Tap changer housing/radiator
G.2	Transformer oil filling at desired oil level
G.3	Conduct transformer oil trial test after oil filling
H.	RE-ASSEMBLING OF CORE/WINDING COIL AND ITS COMPONENT
I.	RE-INSTALLATION OF RADIATOR AND CONSERVATOR TANK AND ITS ACCESSORIES
J.	Preliminary Bushing test
J.1	Primary and secondary bushing test
J.1.1	Insulation resistance test
J.1.2	Insulation power factor test
J.1.3	Non distructive high pot test
K.	REPLACEMENT OF COVER GASKET AND REPAIR OF DAMAGE COOLING FINS
L.	BAKING OF CORE/WINDING COIL ASSEMBLY
N.	LEAK TEST
N.1	Main tank and top cover
N.2	Radiator fittings
N.3	Transformer oil pipe fittings
N.4	Primary and secondary bushing
N.5	Other parts of the power transfomer
O.	FINAL TEST
O.1	Insulation resistance test
O.2	Primary winding resistance test per phase
O.3	Secondary winding resistance test per phase
O.4	Insulation power factor test
O.5	Contact resistance test of high and low tap changer per tap position
O.6	Transformer turn ratio test tap position
O.7	Transformer oil analysis
O.7.1	Water content (ppm)
O.7.2	Dissolved Gas Analysis
O.7.3	Oil Dielectric Strength Voltage breakdown voltage test
O.7.4	Insulation Power Factor
O.7.4a	Dissipation Factor
O.7.4b	Dielectric Loss
O.7.5	Interfacial Tension
O.7.6	Neutralization Number
O.7.7	Color
O.8	Exciting current test
O.9	Open circuit test
O.10	Other related test
P.	SUBMISSION OF REPORT
P.1	Reference test data
P.2	Preliminary bushing test
P.3	Final test duly signed by test license engineer
P.4	Certificate of completion
P.5	Certificate of warranty
Q.	COMMISSIONING
Q.1	The contractor representative shall be present during the final energization and actual loading on the date specified by the coop.
R.	OTHERS
R.1	Zamcelco shall provide two (2) units Distribution transformer rated 50Kva, 7620/240Volts, with fuse cutouts for the power supply of test equipment
R.2	Zamcelco will provide available steel plate in moving the main tank
R.3	Zamcelco boom truck will be available with equipment charges
R.4	The energy consumption used during the duration of project shall be charge to the contractor
R.5	The contractor shall provide ninety four (94) drums brand new transformer oil
R.6	The contractor shall supply and install two (2) units oil & winding temp. gauge with relay contact
R.7	The contractor shall supply and install float diaphram type conservator tank for main and OTLC (either separate tank or one tank with separator) with complete accessories design for 21 Mva
R.8	The contractor shall supply and install Buchholtz relays for Main and OLTC, pipes and fittings
R.9	The contractor shall supply and convert the main tank top cover from welded to bolted type
R.10	The contractor shall supply all lifting activities (Crane/Boom truck)

You may secure the Pre-qualification Requirements from the office of the Finance Department, ZAMCELCO Complex in Putik, this city anytime during office hours and submit the same upon completion of all requirements thereof.

Submission of the Pre-qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 p.m of **APRIL 13, 2007** and no documents pertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

All applicants will be duly notified as to the results of the pre-qualification eligibility process. Only those who are pre-qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

Bidding will be conducted on **APRIL 19, 2007.**

Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bids and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before 2:00 p.m. of **APRIL 19, 2007**. Five percent (5%) Bidder's Bond is required as a matter of policy.

The right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO.

(Sgd.) **REINERIO R. RAMOS**
General Manager

(PDI - March 27 & 28, 2007)

NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS
More Classified Ads:

Supreme Court A19
BCDA B4
PhilHealth B6
DOLE B6
NFA B6
Landbank B6

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION

Northern Luzon Wind Power Project – Phase I

Design, Supply, Delivery, Construction, Erection, Installation, Testing, and Commissioning of the Burgos Switchyard and the Interconnection Works at the 115kV TransCo Laoag Substation

EDC 07-051

1. ***PNOC-Energy Development Corporation*** (PNOC-EDC) intends to apply the sum of ***PHILIPPINE PESOS: Seventy One Million One Hundred Fourteen Thousand Four Hundred Ninety (PhP71,114,490.00)*** being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the ***Design, Supply, Delivery, Construction, Erection, Installation, Testing, and Commissioning of the Burgos Switchyard and the Interconnection Works at the 115kV TransCo Laoag Substation***. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. PNOC-EDC now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the ***Design, Supply, Delivery, Construction, Erection, Installation, Testing, and Commissioning of the Burgos Switchyard for Northern Luzon Wind Power Project – Phase I and the Interconnection Works at the 115kV TransCo Laoag Substation.*** Bidders should possess, among others, the following minimum eligibility requirement:
   a. Should have completed, within the last ten (10) years, at least one (1) 115KV or higher switchyard contract amounting to at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC.

   Application for eligibility may be secured from PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group upon submission of the LOI and payment of a non-refundable fee of **Philippine Pesos One Thousand (PhP1,000.00).** Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents: ***April 27, 2007, 2:00 P.M. (PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group wall clock time)*** at ***1st Floor, Building V, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig.*** Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. For the purpose of clarifying certain issues regarding the Application for Eligibility, PNOC-EDC will hold a Clarificatory Meeting on ***April 11, 2007*** at the ***BAC Room, 1st Floor, PNOC-EDC Building V.***
5. Interested Applicants shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at the address given below on or before ***April 27, 2007.***
6. Interested Applicants may obtain further information from *PNOC-EDC* and inspect the Prequalification Documents at the address given below from *9:00 AM to 4:00 PM* on *March 28, 2007 to April 26, 2007.*

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation
c/o Felipe C. Hernandez – Supervisor, Contracts Admin. Group
1st Floor, Building 5, Energy Center, Merritt Road,
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Tel: (+632) 893-6001 Local 5107
Fax: (+632) 8936001 Local 5273
hernandez.fc@energy.com.ph

(Sgd.) **FRANCIS M. DOLOR**
BAC Chairman

(PDI–March 28, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SUGAR REGULATORY ADMINISTRATION
North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
P.O. Box 70, U.P. Diliman, Quezon City
TIN 000-784-336-000

ERRATUM

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) in the Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the Contract for Janitorial and Security Services of the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA), which was published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer on March 13, 2007 and at **www.philgeps.net** and SRA website, was erroneously published at Php 2,200,000.00 and Php 4,860,000.00 respectively, instead of Php 2,400,000.00 and Php 5,400,000.00 respectively, per Bidding and Awards Committee Resolution No. 06, Series of 2007.

(Sgd.) **JAMES C. LEDESMA**
Administrator
Sugar Regulatory Administration

(PDI – March 28, 2007)

IMMEDIATE HIRING

- **OPERATIONS MANAGER**
- **MARKETING MANAGER**
- **PRODUCT MANAGER**

** At least 5 years working experience with extensive knowledge in electronic gadgets & handling people (for all managerial position)*

- **EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT**

** Fluent in Mandarin/Fookien, English & Filipino (both oral and written communication)*

- **TRAINOR/HR ASSISTANT**

** Must be familiar with office procedures, marketing strategies and different electronic gadgets*

- **MARKETING STAFF**
- **ADVERTISING ASSISTANT**
- **SECRETARY/RECEPTIONIST**

** F, 18-27 yrs old w/ pleasing personality*

- **CSR**
- **SALES LADY**

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hug.info@gmail.com

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---

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
COUNTY OF GRAND FORKS

IN DISTRICT COURT
NORTHEAST CENTRAL JUDICIAL DISTRICT

In re Change of Name of Minor,

Imelda G. Etti, Petitioner

NOTICE OF NAME CHANGE OF MINOR

File No. 18-07-C-00083

Please take notice that Erika Joyce G. Gutierrez of Grand Forks, North Dakota intends to change her name to Erika Joyce Etti, pursuant to North Dakota Century Code 32-28-02. Any objection to the said name change must be made in writing to above Court, or to the petitioner at the address below, within 30 days of this publication. If no objections are filed, the Court may respond to the petition without further hearing.

Dated March 20, 2007
Petitioner: Imelda G. Etti
Address: 1088 Oxbow Court,
Grand Forks, ND 58203 Phone: 701-775-3311

Dated this 20th day of March, 2007.

ROBERT VOGEL LAW OFFICE, P.C.
By: */s/Alice R. Senechal*
Alice R. Senechal (#04308)
100 N. 3rd Street, Suite 202
PO Box 5570 Grand Forks, ND 58206-5570
(701) 775-3117
ATTORNEYS FOR PETITIONER

(PDI–March 28, 2007)

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JAC FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP, INC., G/F. Ever Gotesco Grand Central, Caloocan City will sell all unredeemed pledges for the months of **SEPT. & OCT. 2006** on **APRIL 18, 2007** at 11:00 a.m. **J. Lanuza** – *Auctioneer.*
(PDI–March 28, 2007)

OBITUARIES

"In peace I shall both lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord make me secure..." Psalms 4:9

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS OF

BANCO MARAGONDON

and

STO. NIÑO RURAL BANK

announce with deep sorrow the demise of

GUILLERMO RIEGO DE DIOS NARVAEZ

FOUNDER & CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

who peacefully joined his Creator on March 25, 2007 at the age of 92.

His remains lie in state at the St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Chapel, Magallanes Village, Makati City and will be brought to Maragondon, Cavite on Thursday, March 29, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.

Interment will be on Sunday, April 1, 2007 at the Maragondon Cemetery after the 2:00 p.m. Mass

---

OBITUARIES

We, the Family of the late

JOAQUIN "AQUIN" SANTOS SUMPAICO, SR.

Remember, celebrate and believe in Christ's love
as manifested in our Papa's life.

Thank you for your prayers, offerings, and presence
that made his passage to eternal life
a comfort and a grace.

Reddie and **Sandy**, **Carlo**, **Lissa**, **Ninin**
Jojo and **Ditsy**, **Tippy**, and **Obet**, **Sam**, **Riel** and **Iguel**
Fr. Jonjee, SJ, **Jaypee** and **Odette**, **Jong**
Fr. Lennie, SJ
Mimi and **Bits**, **Tuton**, **Ayen**, **Cissy** and **Lara**
Didit

Corazon Yatco Alfonso

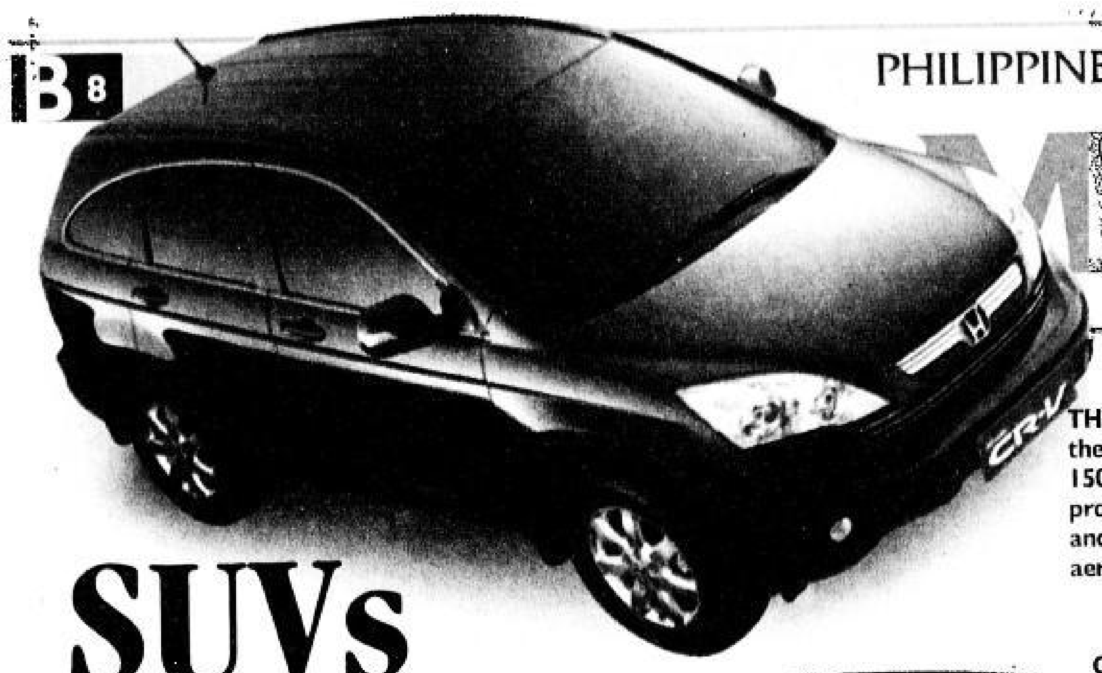
of Biñan, Laguna
(August 17, 1916 – March 26, 2007)

Passed away in the Grace of the Lord
at the age of 90.

She is survived by her brother **Saul**, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, relatives and friends and they request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains are laid at St. Michael's Chapel in Biñan, Laguna. Funeral services will be held on Friday, March 30, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. at the family interment site.

"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."
2 Corinthians 5:4-5



THE FRONT end of the A-pillar is sifted 150 mm forward to provide a bigger view and increase aerodynamics.

SUVs 'in bloom' this month

OVERHAULED and redesigned

By Tessa R. Salazar

IN JUST THREE WEEKS this March, three sport utility vehicle (SUV) brands have sprouted and have become the most recent additions to a blossoming SUV market.

On March 3, the 2008 Porsche Cayenne was formally introduced; then on March 14, the Nissan Patrol Safari was unveiled. Finally, on the 23rd, the third-generation Honda CR-V was presented to the motoring media.

The best in CR-V 'trilogy'

The third-generation Honda CR-V, which sports a more streamlined profile (notice the projector headlights, forward-shifted windshield, distinctive tilt of the rear tailgate, and aerodynamic flanks), has improved technical features with its advanced real time 4WD dual pump system, whose function is to sense different road surfaces and automatically engage all-wheel power whenever greater traction is required.

The DoHC i-VTEC engine for the 2.4-liter variant produces 170 ps at 5,800 rpm. The SOHC i-VTEC engine for the 2-liter version, on the other hand, produces 150 ps at 6,200 rpm. Honda Philippines says better fuel consumption can be achieved with the new engines.

The newest CR-V rolls along on 17" alloy wheels. A bit higher in ground clearance from the second-generation versions, the CR-V offers the easy-to-open upward-opening tailgate. Rear seating has a 49:20:20 split. It boasts of 15 utility storages.

Introductory prices are 2.0-li MT 2WD at P1.190 million; 2.0-li AT 2WD at P1.250 million and the 2.4-li AT 4WD at P1.450 million.

Patrol's pulse-quickening power

The 2007 Nissan Patrol Safari 4-wheel drive now sports a 4.8-liter TB48DE gasoline engine. This is supported by a 5-speed automatic transmission with manual shift mode. It has 252 hp at 4,800 rpm. The gas variant was previously 4.5 liter with 201 hp at 4,400 rpm.

The ZD30DDTi diesel engine, on the other hand, offers all the benefits of diesel fuel economy and a "pulse-quickening surge of class-leading power," according to Universal Motors Corp. The 3-liter diesel now has a 160 hp at 3,600 rpm. Previously it had 155 hp at 3,600 rpm.

The interior of the 2007 Nissan Patrol Super Safari features a newly designed grill and front bumper, new design headlamps (Xenon for the gasoline variant), 18" alloy wheels (bigger for the gas variant), colored and electric foldable mirrors, bigger rear combination lamps, and for the gasoline variant, the TB48DE engine.

The manual diesel is priced at P2.408 million; automatic diesel at P2.505 million; and the automatic gas variant at P2.697 million.

More aerodynamic Cayenne

The second-generation Porsche Cayenne's three model variants—Cayenne, Cayenne S and Cayenne Turbo—sport more powerful

SUVS/ B9

FUEL consumption down, engine power up, says Porsche manufacturer on New Cayenne models.

WITHIN ITS existing facility in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, TAP will add another plant to beef up its manual transmission production capacity.

Toyota beefs up parts production hub

By Charles E. Buban

IN 2006, TOYOTA'S GLOBAL PRODUCTION surged 10 percent, resulting in more than 9 million vehicles produced.

This year, the Japanese auto giant is targeting more than 9.4 million and will need the Philippines' contribution to achieve this goal.

Recently, Toyota Autoparts Philippines, a majority-owned unit of Toyota Motors Corp. here, announced it will be investing an additional P5.6 billion for a 1.4-hectare production plant—as well as hiring of additional 300 employees—within its existing facility at the Toyota Special Economic Zone in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

"Toyota is committed to respond to the needs of our customers all over the world. We have decided to produce the R-type transmission here in the Philippines aside from the G-type, which we have been producing since 1992," TAP president Yasuro Takeuchi announced.

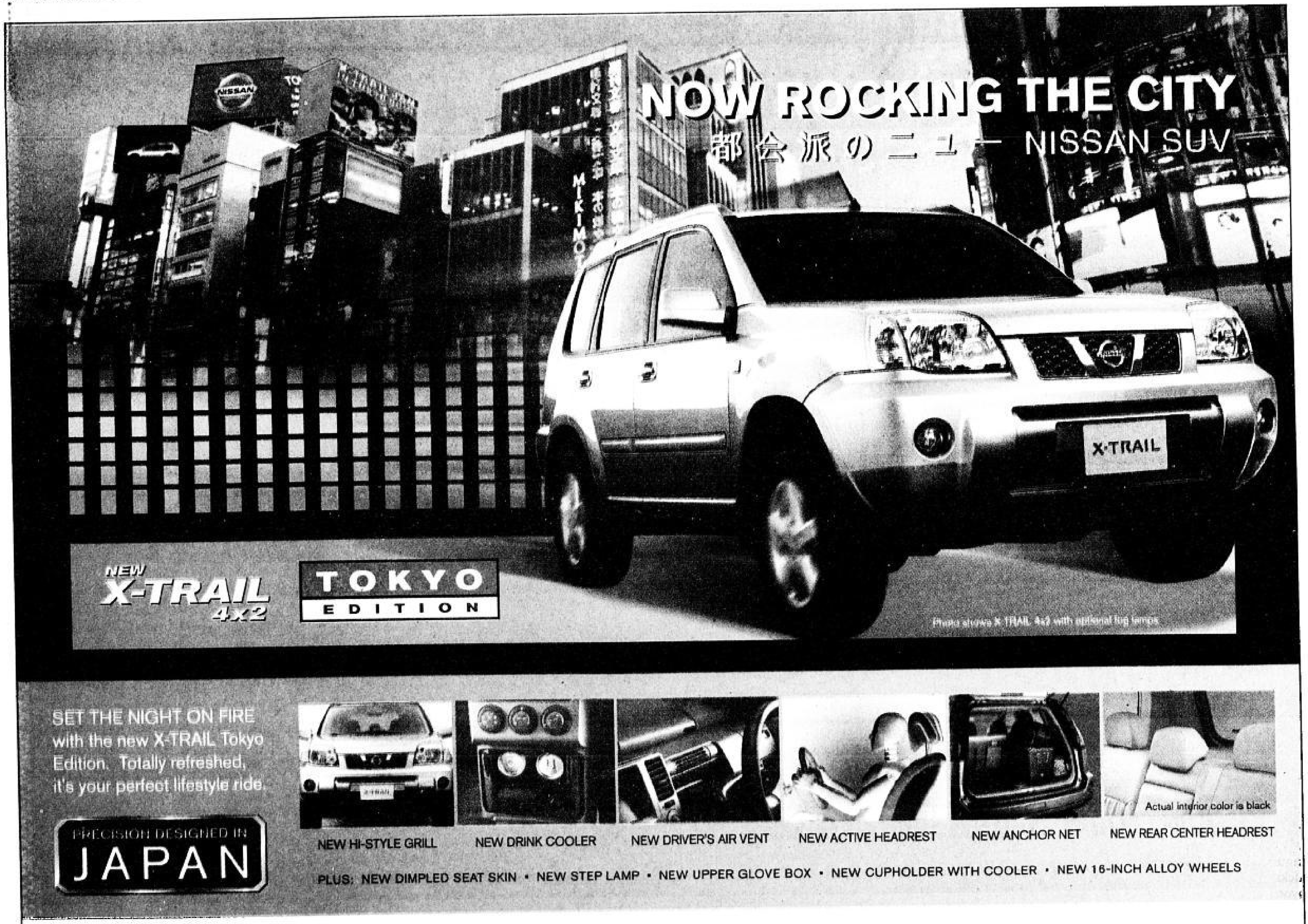
From 150,000 to 333,000

The additional plant will increase TAP's capacity to produce manual transmission to 333,000 units from the 150,000 it currently makes.

Once operational, TAP is scheduled to export this transmission to seven countries including Thailand, South Africa, Ar-

TOYOTA/ B9

THE TAP is one's of Toyota's major partners for its IMV project.



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Precision driving and Godzilla at MIAS 2007

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE WORLD Trade Center tomorrow when Worldbex Services International opens the 3rd Manila International Auto Show (MIAS) offering exciting new displays and features from March 29 to April 1. MIAS began as the Manila Motor Show in 2005 but switched to its current name to reflect the international caliber of its annual event.

This year, MIAS will bring in a totally new attraction. For the first time in the Philippines, spectacular precision driving will be exhibited by Russ Swift, the professional stunt driver who choreographed the fantastic Mini Cooper S maneuvers in "The Italian Job" movie and who holds three motoring-related Guinness World Records: parallel parking in the tightest space, J Turn in the tightest space and the fastest donuts.

8,000 precision performances

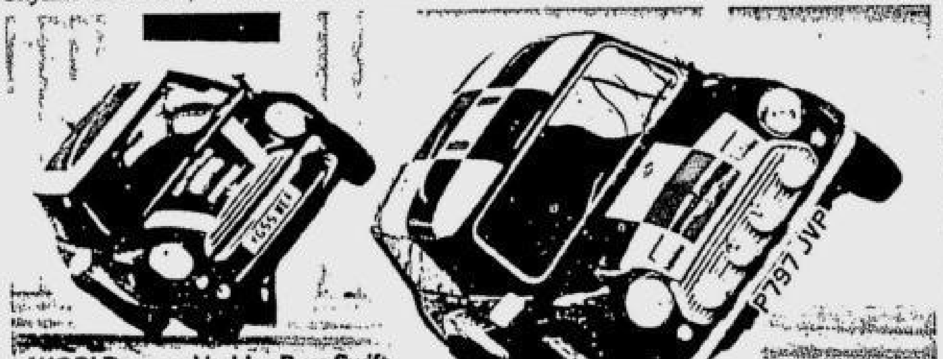
So far, Swift has performed over 8,000 precision driving displays at international auto shows in over 50 countries aside from working closely with the London Police, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the Institute of Advanced Motorists and other road safety organizations to promote safe driving. He has also appeared on the "Top Gear" TV show teaching grandmothers how to do donuts.

At MIAS 2007, Swift, at the wheel of a Mazda3, will display his trademark parallel parking—spinning a car into a parking space just 33 cm longer than the vehicle—and two-wheel driving at breakneck speed.

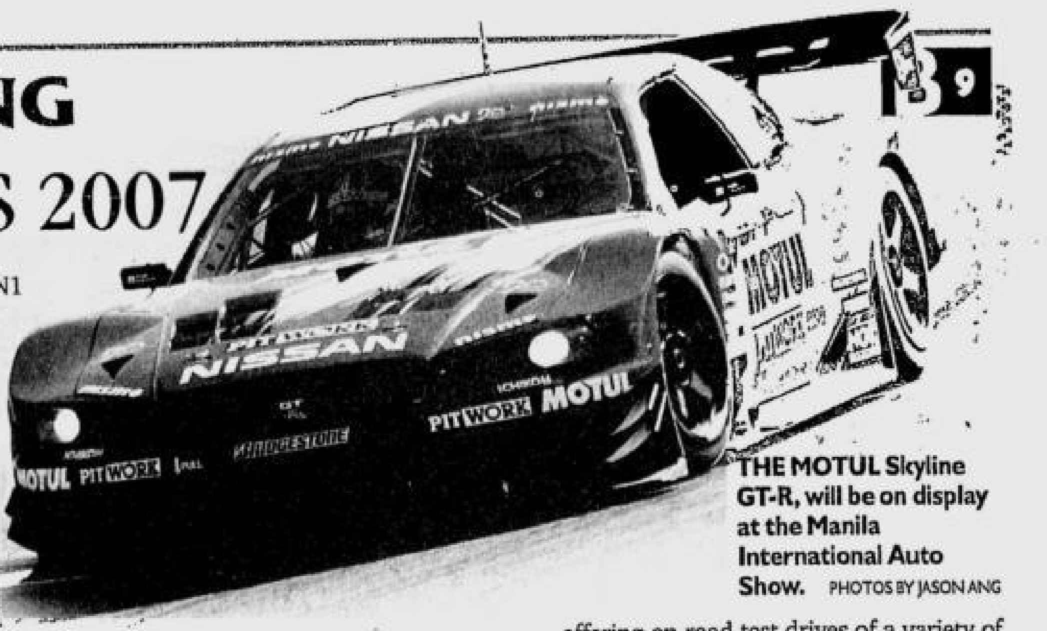
Godzilla of sports cars

As if the world-famous Russ Swift's eye-popping driving stunts were not enough to lure crowds despite the summer heat, MIAS 2007 will also display the Nissan Skyline GT-R, the 500-bhp "Godzilla of sports cars" that has equaled if not surpassed the overall performances of the Porsche 911 and Ferrari Testarossa. The Skyline GT-R R34, released in 1999 with a production date up to 2002, had an N1 engine and speedometer rating up to 300 km per hour (kph). Only 45 units of the R34 N1's were produced by Nissan, 12 of which were delivered to Nismo (Nissan Motorsports) for racing.

Competing professionally, the Skyline GT-R won various motor sport titles such as the Mount Panorama championships, the Spanish Touring Car Championship, Pikes Peak Hill Climb and some podium finishes at the Le Mans 24-hour Grand Prix, Super Taikyu, All-Japan GT Fuji 500 and Japan Super GT Series. At present, the Skyline GT-R sees action in import drag racing, time attack and drift competitions worldwide.



WORLD record holder Russ Swift will show off his precision driving skill at the Manila Int'l Auto Show.



THE MOTUL Skyline GT-R, will be on display at the Manila International Auto Show. PHOTOS BY JASON ANG

Actual and street-legal

Autoplus Sportzentrium, the exclusive distributor of Motul oil and lubricants, will bring in the No. 22 Motul Pitwork Skyline GT-R 500, the race car actually used in the Super GT and Fuji GT 500. The street-legal version of the Skyline GT-R will also be displayed at MIAS 2007.

The Skyline GT-R exhibit will be supplemented by the public debuts of more than a dozen recently launched new cars: the 2007 Honda CR-V, Mazda MX-5, Mitsubishi Outlander and Pajero, Nissan Teana and Patrol, Hyundai Elantra and Veracruz, Toyota Yaris, Suzuki Alto, Subaru WRX STi and BMW Z4 roadster. Aside from these new models, all kinds of cars, vans, pickups and trucks will be on display ranging from Suzuki to Ferrari plus exotic cars from Top Gear magazine.

Continued tradition

MIAS 2007 will continue its tradition of offering on-road test drives of a variety of motor vehicles and the Ford No Boundaries off-road test course as well as aftermarket booths where you can buy alloy wheels, tires, body kits, sound systems and other car accessories.

And, to top it all, the winner of the coveted 3rd Car of the Year (Coty) Award, the 2006 Honda Civic 1.8 S, will be the centerpiece of the show. Since Coty's origin three years ago, MIAS has supported Coty's endeavor to help the consumer in making an informed decision on the products offered by the automotive industry.

All of which boils down to one thing: it will be proactive, as well as fun, for car buffs and families alike to go to MIAS 2007 before the Holy Week vacation break. See you all tomorrow at the World Trade Center!

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: As long as there are tests, there will be prayers in public schools.

The hills are alive

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

LET ME HEAVE A SIGH OF RELIEF AFTER a worrying lull spanning a few years, organized and competitive road racing is back. Before the general readership starts complaining about the dangerous and seemingly irresponsible idea of racing fast on public roads—an explanation, a history lesson is in order.

The discipline of driving contests on public roads is the mother of all motor sports. This is but commonsense, of course. Before there were any dedicated racing circuits purpose built to test the mettle of men and their driving machines, there was the open road.

Oldest tests of pace

Some of the oldest tests of pace are classic races like the Italian Targa Florio (1906), the English Shelsley Walsh time trial (1905) and the French La Turbie speed test (1897). These events bring us back to a day when even the 24hrs of Le Mans, the Mille Miglia were still probably just on the drawing board. Grand prix racing was also just a loosely structured gentleman's sport without a fixed schedule.

There is an interesting commonality among the said three classic races. The Targa Florio, the 400-km cannonball through the roads of Sicily, is known for the dramatic change of elevation, climbing up from sea level, passing through treacherous mountain passes and compounded hairpins. The other two races earlier mentioned, the events held in England and in France, were dedicated races going up twisty roads on a side of a hill or a mountain.

It seems men and their motoring metal had an affinity with testing available skill, handling and power against tight corners and the all rending influence of gravity.

Hillclimb championship

Segue to a hundred years later and the mountain roads of Luzon. Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, the 2007 Philippine Hillclimb Championship to the national motor sport scene.

The recipe for this event's appeal is simple. Take some challenging uphill road stages complete with their simmering summer tarmac. Release a talent-laden, rag-tag bunch of drivers from the rally, slalom, autocross, circuit and drift disciplines. Add to the mix a varied field of amazing machines—European exotica, all-wheel-drive rally monsters to prepared daily drives. Spectators should expect real cars, on real roads, running really fast with competition and excitement just a spark short of spontaneous combustion.

Winning is determined by the amount of time it takes them to tackle a closed and secured section of mountain road. Fastest time wins the day, with awarded points accumulated to determine the champions for the different class competitions and the national series.

Safety is, of course, the utmost concern, with the all-out cars of the national series required to run roll cages, fire extinguishers and FIA-approved bucket seats and harnesses. Helmets are *de rigueur* for all participants.

Competing

On a personal note, yes the rumors are true. I have thrown my gloves into the ring and will be contesting a class of the Hillclimb Series. What drove this motoring hack to put on his boots, helmet and gloves again? Simple answers all around, really.

Primarily, that I haven't driven competitively in around five years, aside from the odd autocross here and there. Road racing is also very close to my heart, as the rally years I've had are some of the most memorable of my thirtysomething life. Finally, nothing gives me pleasure like flowing a set of sequential switchbacks, playing with the throttle to make a car dance to the rhythm of the road. It was inevitable that I'd have something to do with this discipline and the series.

So to those who wish to watch this test of men and their crazy racing machines, information on the series can be found on www.hillclimbclub.com, with dates and locations for each of the three legs. To the other competitors, I wish you all the luck; may the fickle gods of traction and the absolute laws of physics keep you in their favor. To my rallying brethren, I just have one thing to say—the boys of summer are back.

SUVs 'in bloom' this month

From page B8

engines and upgraded technical features. For the first time, all three models provide direct gasoline injection. Aerodynamics on all three models has improved (drag coefficient of 0.35) compared to its predecessors (0.38 and 0.39). Fuel economy is claimed to have improved by up to 15 percent (even in realistic driving conditions).

With a striking face, the Cayenne models have a wide and muscular body, featuring headlights in a brand-new design and broader wheel arches.

Press information provided by PGA Cars, Porsche's exclusive distributor in the Philippines, show that engine power has been increased—290 bhp on the six cylinder and 385 bhp on the eight cylinder. The maximum output of the Porsche Cayenne Turbo is a whistle-inducing 500 bhp. All these horses add up to top speeds of 227 kph for the Cayenne, 252 kph for the Cayenne S, and 275 kph for the Turbo.

Cayenne V6 is priced at P6.350 million; Cayenne S, P7.750 million; and Cayenne Turbo, P8.850 million.

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Toyota beefs up parts . . .

From page B8

gentina and Venezuela.

The Philippines joins Japan, Thailand and India as the only four countries where Toyota produces its R-type transmission.

The much bigger R-type (in comparison to the G-Type) transmission is paired to Toyota's big engined models such as the Hi-Lux pickup.

The appointment of products that a country will manufacture is part of Toyota's innovative international multipurpose vehicle (IMV) project to create an optimized global manufacturing and supply system for pickup trucks and multipurpose vehicles to satisfy Toyota's market demand in more than 140 countries worldwide.

Crucial hub

"We have decided to increase our investment in the Philippines, which is a crucial hub of our production strategy. We hope that the (Philippine) government will continue to improve the country's overall conditions," said Akira Okabe, Toyota Motor Corp. senior managing director during the opening ceremonies attended by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The TAP was established in 1990 and has since produced 2.4-million G-Type transmissions, 1.4-million constant velocity joints, as well as invested a total of P5.4 billion in the Philippines.

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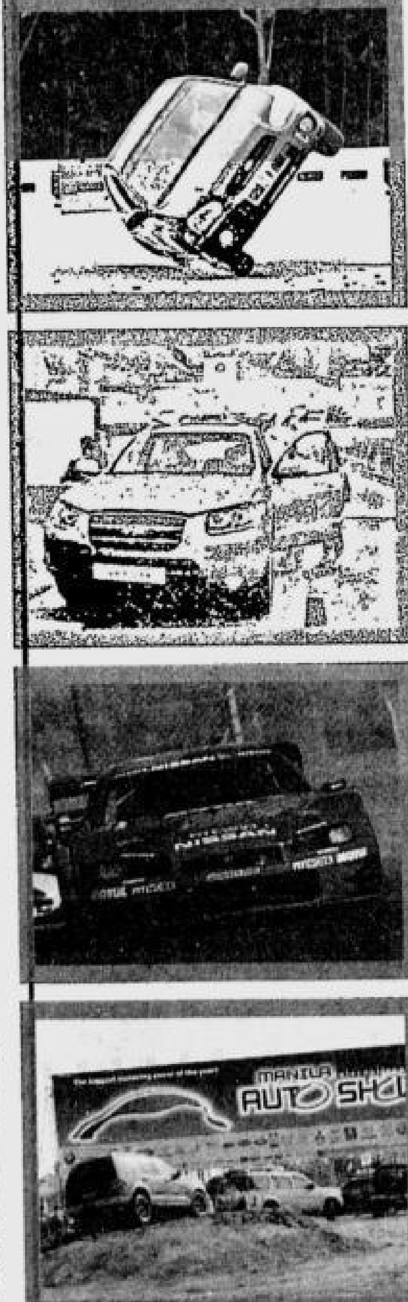

PNOC-AFC close to sealing $1-B biodiesel deal

US-UK group to fund establishment of jatropha plantations

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER MORE THAN SIX MONTHS OF NEgotiations, PNOC Alternative Fuels Corp. (PNOC-AFC) is close to signing a biofuels deal with a United States-United Kingdom consortium that may entail as much as $1 billion in investments.

Once the deal has been closed, the British-American consortium, in partnership with the PNOC-AFC, will initially establish a biodiesel refinery with a capacity of 350,000 metric tons (MT), PNOC-AFC president Peter Anthony Abaya said.

"Within the next two to three years, the group intends to rapidly expand (refining capacity in the Philippines) to an aggregate of 3 million MT," he told the INQUIRER.

Abaya said the group also planned to fully finance the establishment of plantations, primarily of jatropha, for the feedstock to be used for the proposed biodiesel refineries.

The US-UK consortium is eyeing some 1 million hectares for its plantations, he said.

"We expect to produce three tons of crude per hectare," Abaya said. "The proposed plantation area is sufficient to provide all the required feedstock for the planned refineries."

At the onset, he said, the group would use locally produced coconut oil as well as Malaysian palm oil as feedstock for its refineries.

As soon as its planned jatropha plantations are ready for commercial production, the consortium will then shift to jatropha crude oil, he said.

He said the deal, once signed, should not only allow the country to take advantage of biodiesel, but also of other chemicals that could be used to produce environment-friendly products.

In their discussions, Abaya said the consortium had proposed to put up two-stack refineries: one for biodiesel and one for polyols—chemicals that could be used to produce biodegradable plastics, housing materials, mattresses, foams, insulation materials, and rubber.

"I foresee this group to be our biggest investor and partner in biofuels," Abaya said, foreseeing its impact in promoting biofuels instead of petroleum.

"I see this as a genuine economic growth engine that will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, alleviate property, reforest our lands, stabilize our riverbanks, mountainous slopes, and topsoil, reduce national greenhouse gas emissions, and ultimately clean the air. That's only on the upstream. The downstream products will have bigger economic benefits. All this fueled by that single jatropha seed."

PNOC-AFC has already started talks with various local and foreign firms for the implementation of biofuels-related projects, particularly biodiesel.

In an earlier interview, Abaya said that among those interested in undertaking biodiesel-related projects were Korea's Samsung Corp., Japan's Sumitomo Corp. and JGC, the National Biofuels of the United States, Malaysia's HDZ and Biogreen Energy Sdn Bhd, and the Brunei National Petroleum Co.

Local firms Chemrez Technologies Inc., Limketkai Manufacturing Co., Enerfuse (composed of new oil players Flying V, Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc., Seaoil Philippines Inc. and Eastern Petroleum Corp.), Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Petron Corp. are also eyeing biodiesel projects.

PNOC-AFC had already signed a memorandum of understanding with Samsung for an P8.2-billion jatropha plantation and refinery project. It also disclosed that Sumitomo had agreed to conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of a biofuels central terminal in Bataan.

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UCPB to auction off ₱15B worth of bad assets in June

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE UNITED COCONUT PLANTERS BANK will auction off as much as P15 billion worth of bad assets through the Special Purpose Vehicle framework sometime in June as part of its efforts to clean up its books and post a profit by 2009.

UCPB president Jose Querubin told reporters in Cebu City that the bank would sign an agreement with Ernst & Young this Friday for the latter to act as the bank's financial advisor for the transaction.

The SPV Law aims to help banks get rid of bad assets by waiving some of the taxes and reducing fees usually collected in the sale or transfer of assets. It waives the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and expanded value-added tax. It likewise reduces registration and transfer fees by 50 percent.

UCPB was supposed to sell as much as P20 billion worth of bad assets through the SPV this year. But Querubin said the bank was able to negotiate deals over some of the idle property assets, and excluded them from the auction. Only P14 to P15 billion worth of soured stock would be included in the SPV tranche.

With the SPV sale, and the bank's proposed conversion into fresh capital of about P12 billion worth of remaining loans with the state-controlled Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., the bank is on its way to posting a profit by 2009, Querubin said.

UCPB, most of whose shares are sequestered—making it more difficult for the bank to raise capital—entered into a 10-year rehabilitation program with the PDIC in July 2003.

It will be the second time for UCPB to conduct a bulk sale using the SPV framework. In 2005, the bank successfully sold P11.5 billion of its nonperforming loans to US-based asset management company Avenue Asia Special Situation Fund. From a high of P41.3 billion in December 2002, UCPB has slashed its stock of nonperforming assets to P28.9 billion at the end of 2005.

Through its initiatives, UCPB expects its stock of soured assets to go down further to P7.8 billion this year.

The soured assets eyed for disposal this year, whether through the SPV or individual property deals, consist of P6.29 billion of non-performing loans and about P13.75 billion of real and other properties acquired.

The unloading of non-performing assets will save the bank around P150 million a year in cost related to maintaining idle assets in its books.

For its part, the PDIC is keen on converting all or part of UCPB's remaining loans worth P12 billion into hybrid instruments, qualifying as tier 1 capital, once the bank has reduced its stock of bad assets.

Gov't unit owes MRTC $45M

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE GOVERNMENT UNIT THAT OPERATES the MRT 3 owes Metro Rail Transit Corp. (MRTC), the private conglomerate which built that section of the mass transit system, $44.67 million in rental and maintenance fees, according to transport officials.

Under the build-lease-transfer deal, MRTC would build and equip the rail system. In return, MRTC would receive from the government monthly rental and maintenance fees through the Metro Rail Transit Authority (MRTA), a unit of the Department of Transportation and Communications.

MRTA general manager Roberto Lastimoso acknowledged that the government has missed some payments since last year. The MRTA is in default of $36.6 million in rental fees from April 2006 to March 2007. It also owes MRTC $8.04 million for maintenance fees from September 2006 to March 2007.

Lastimoso said that the monthly earnings of MRT 3 are not enough to cover the fees. The Edsa-based rail system currently earns P135 million in monthly revenues and another P20 million a month from development rights fees.

He said part of the problem comes from the DOTC's decision to implement a socialized fare with a minimum of P10 and a maximum of P15.

For the MRTA to cover its payments, the prescribed basic rate for the MRT 3 should be P17, and a maximum of P34 to the farthest station.

"That is why we have arrears," Lastimoso said.

He also said the MRTA is considering refinancing its debts to catch up on payments.

The government has asked the Department of Justice for advice on how to best acquire the rail system from the MRTC and save on the monthly fees, said Guiling Mamondiong, DOTC undersecretary for railways.

He said the system is estimated to be worth $750 million to $800 million in value and its acquisition could be financed through bonds and concessional loans.

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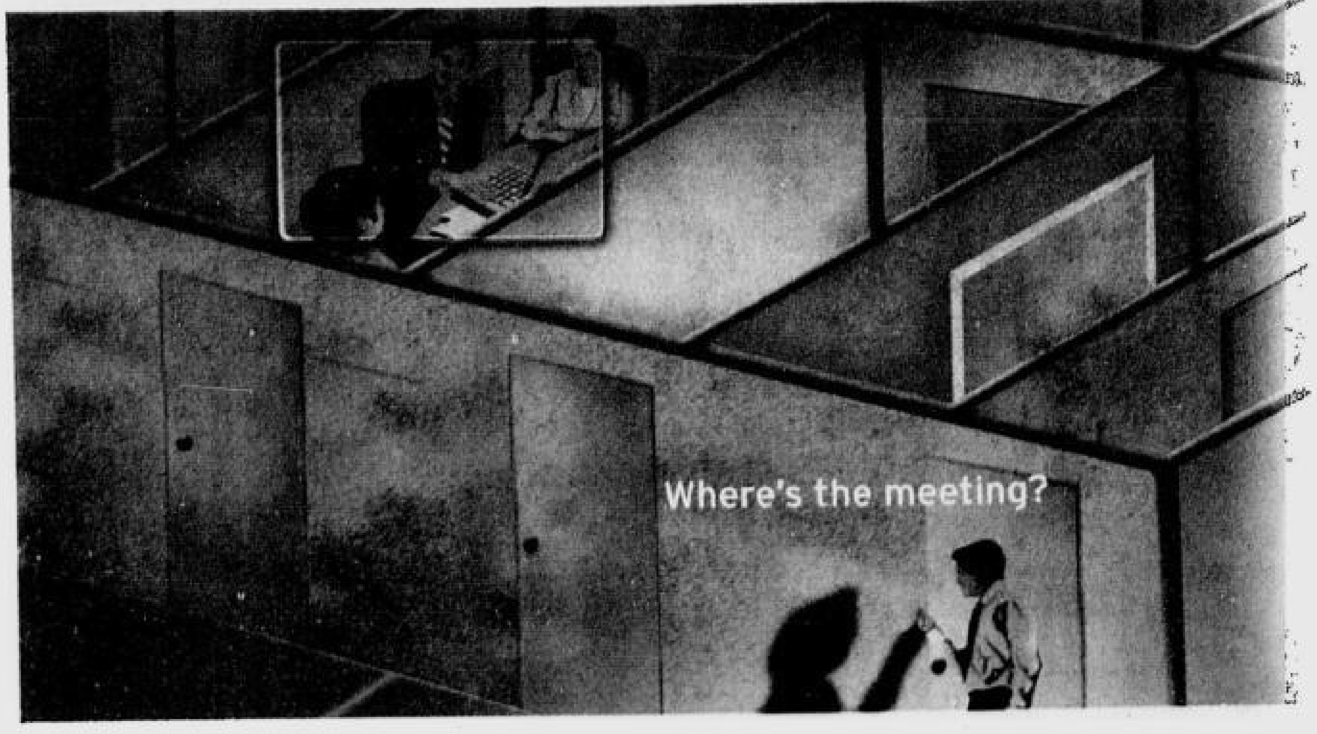

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Class of 2007

It's toga time again. 2bU! celebrates the triumph of this year's graduates with a packed issue. Graduation is as much a time for looking back as gazing into the future. So we asked students from different schools to tell us about their plans for the future and also asked a few brave souls to dig up their old photos and tell us how much they've changed since they left high school. We also have graduation gift suggestions, fashion tips, party ideas and graduation essays. Plus stories about Friendster—because we know you want to stay in touch with your school friends as you embark on new adventures. Congratulations, graduates!

Hello, world!

UPON ENTERING COLLEGE, some people already know what they want to do for the rest of their lives: be doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers.

Others aren't as lucky and end up shifting courses halfway through college, or just slugging it out for the sake of getting a degree (and that's if they graduate). Others go for careers that promise to get them a lot of money within a few years, never mind if their hearts aren't in it.

It so happens that the course you wish for in high school and pursue in college will determine not just your career but also your life. So high-school students, take heed: Before you tick off that box with an impressive-sounding course next to it, ask yourself if you really want to tinker with molecules and chemicals for the rest of your life.

Aside from that, the course will also change the way you act, the people you hang out with and, most importantly, the way you think.

For this issue, we interviewed 10 graduating University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication Journalism students and 10 from the Electronics and Communications Engineering department at the Ateneo de Manila University.

As it turned out, each group has interests and advocacies that are so different from the other. But they all have one thing in common: As fresh graduates, they're ready to take on the world and fulfill their dreams.

Turn to page C2

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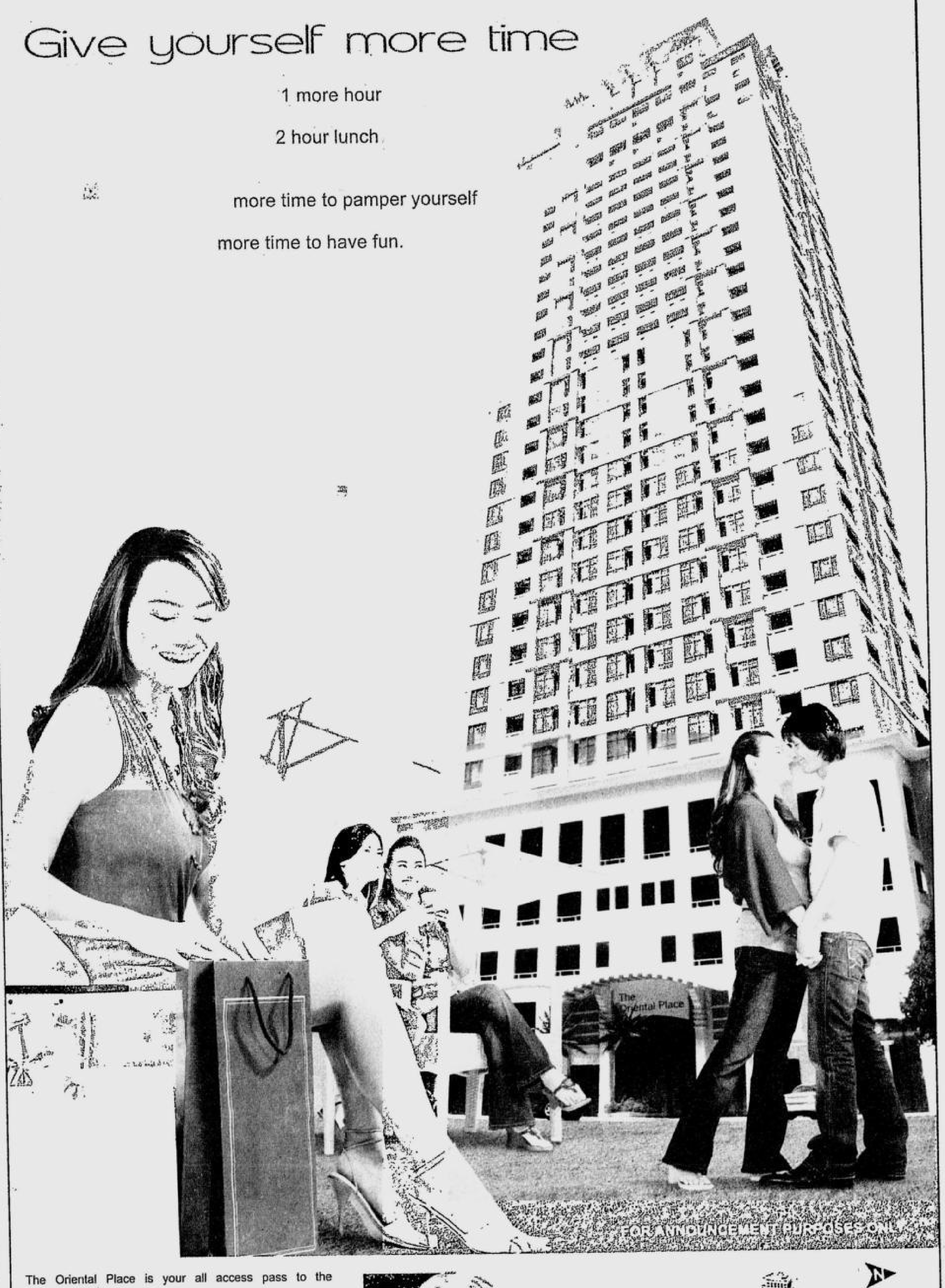

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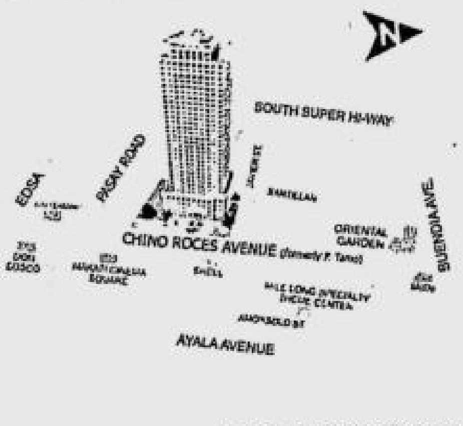

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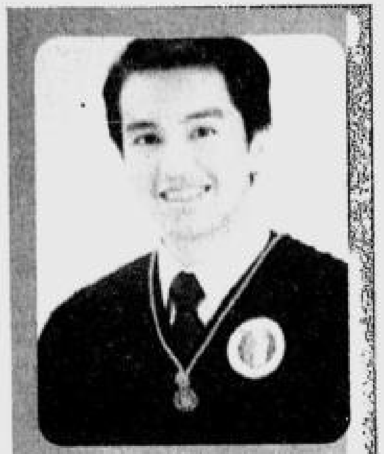


Ronjo Solis, 21

"Communication[illegible]"

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

Working, getting myself promoted after some time. But more than that, I really just want to be happy and fulfilled with what I'm doing. *At sana may Girlfriend na ako by* that time. I'm really praying for it.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

I can't deny what I really want to do, but I can't deny it to the important concepts and things I have learned from my course. Integrating what I want with what I have learned in college is one of my greatest challenges right now. Though I've taken engineering for five years, my heart and passion is really into graphic design, painting and graphic arts. I want to pursue something that defines me, something creative and innovative. I want to study graphics and design abroad, work for some time, come back here and start some sort of graphics and design university for everyone for free! A very far-fetched dream, haha! Honestly, I want to do something fulfilling that reaches out to other people while making use of my creative and wacky side.

Agustin Rafael Reyes, 22

"Girl and Gay Magnet"

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

Married and living in a different country.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

Spend time with my loved one.

Gimel Tominez, 2[illegible]

"Mr. Wisdom"

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

Probably already with a job that I would love and settled [illegible] adventures [illegible].

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

Simply to live life fully [illegible].

Jonas Mapile, 21

"Mr. Trend-setter"

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

Someone who has a good position in a reputable company.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

God has plans. *Que sera sera.*

[illegible] Castillo, 21

[illegible]

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

Studying [illegible] graduating [illegible] I am afraid that wrinkles [illegible] hair will then be [illegible].

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

Study, and I don't just mean read books. I like to be [illegible] crack jokes even [illegible] they are [illegible].

Marvin See, 21

"Boy next door"

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

I see myself as an engineer in a stable relationship, driving my own pimped-out car, working in a multinational company, providing my parents with everything they need.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

I've always dreamed of traveling around the world. If I have spare time, I would definitely travel across Europe, Asia and America with my loved one.

Engineers building their future

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

HANGING out after classes

IF ATENEO ELECTRONICS Engineering Society (Aeces) president Luigi Onglao is to be believed, then the Ateneo de Manila University's Electronics and Communications Engineering Batch 2007 is definitely one to look out for in the future. "ECE is populated by honor students, geniuses, athletes and leaders," Onglao said. "[But] more than their accomplishments, one special trait of the Ateneo ECE people is their constant application of their skills and talents to really engage in nation-building."

He added, "The batch knows how to work smartly. We do not just engage ourselves in any activity without doing a background check to study the possible consequences of our actions."

They don't spend 100 percent of their time in laboratories, of course. Like fun-loving young people, members of ECE Batch 2007 know how to party. Aside from th lege parties (where everyone pass end of the night from drinking en of liquor), the students spend the jogging, swimming, hiking and p ketball as a group.

"Unfortunately, our love for s ing activities is invariably offset by love for food. After exercising, we out to celebrate and have a fo Onglao revealed. "When we're no eating or working out, we play a h puter games varying from the me lenging to the outrageously nonse

Melanie Yu Pinlac, 20

The omnipresent student council president

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

My plan is to study and work at the same time. It's probably hard, but I really want to take another course or get a master's degree (in media studies or anthropology). While studying, most likely I will be working for an NGO like Ibon Foundation; or a broadcast media organization as a writer, production assistant or segment producer; or a travel/National Geographic kind of magazine.

Even if those things would not prosper, I would continue serving the Filipino as well as my fellow students. Most likely, I would still be active in mass organizations.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

I'll probably still be working for the media (which I hope by that time has truly embodied its social responsibility and is critical and progressive), and applying what I've learned in my nth year of existence for the progress of the country and the people. If not, then whatever it is, it will benefit the Filipino people, and not cause further suffering among the masses.

Richel C. Catalan, 21

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

I want to work in a fashion or news magazine, ironically not as a writer but as a photographer. I've always been interested in taking pictures, and I believe taking courses in basic photography, photojournalism and TV journalism improved my skills in handling the camera. I became more interested in this kind of work when I had a chance to go with wedding photojournalist Mel Cortez. I see myself going places and doing magazine pictorials five years from now. It'll be really exciting!

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

I guess working for a fashion mag for the rest of your life isn't a bad idea, though I think I want to be a photographer who can freely travel forever, especially if I wish to have a family of my own. Maybe I'll just put up my own mag! I'd also want to teach dancing and have my own dance studio, though this isn't related to my course anymore. I so love dancing that I wish I could do it for the rest of my life and earn from it.

Eliza Victoria, 20

Voted "the Luis Teodoro of Batch 2007"

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

I don't care where I'd be five years from now as long as I still have time to write and still have my sanity and ideals intact.

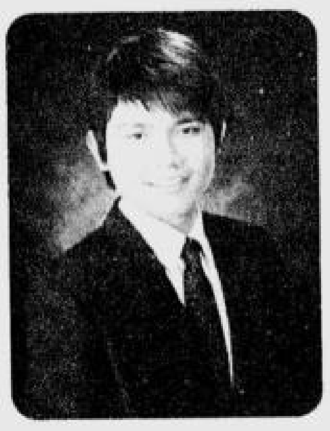
Glenn Perez, 21

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

I'd like to pursue a law degree. Given the chance otherwise, media-related work where I get to travel a lot sounds cool.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

Writing for the rest of my life is fine with me. We live in a society where issues have to be reported for us to have a well-informed public.



Mark Joseph H. Ubalde, 21

"Mr. Footloose"

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

Five years from now, I see myself working in a reputable media company doing investigative reports and documentaries.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

I want to be an instigator of change.

Abby Generalia, 21

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

I see myself as a documentary producer. *Kaso lang, walang promotion sa Pilipinas, hehe. Gusto ko* [illegible] entrepreneur. I know [illegible] interest [illegible] now, *pero* I haven't decided how to handle it.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

Of course, I want to stabilize my own career before I settle down.

Journalists in the making

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

OF ALL THE STUDENTS IN the University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication, Journalism students are often portrayed as the most radical (i.e. banner-waving protesters), and for a reason. Many of them are at the forefront of rallies and other protest actions.

"The defining moment for many of them was when Proclamation 1017 was imposed," said Danilo Arao, a faculty member from the Journalism department. "Normally, Masscom students are stereotyped as apathetic, but a lot of students (about 150) went to the college assembly on short notice, despite it supposedly being dangerous. It was not necessarily a sign of activism or militancy, but of concern, and the batch deserves credit for being there."

He added, "A peculiar characteristic of this batch is that students are concerned about media issues and the national situation. They're a product of the times—the volatile political situation shaped them."

Journalism's batch 2007 is "a healthy mix of intelligent students and those who you'd wonder how they made it to UP," Arao said.

"But on the whole, the students can voice out their opinions and vent their frustrations in class discussions," Arao said.

"Some have the potential to make it big in the media industry. There are good writers who have the conscientiousness to research and also have the skill, discipline, and passion for the craft."

However, the people from the Journalism department aren't just free-spirited radicals. Batch 2007 also has photography enthusiasts, nature lovers and literary journalists in the making. And like any graduating batch, they're also starry eyed about the future.

We asked them, how do you see yourself in five years, and what do you want to do for the rest of your life?

Look out for these students. They just might be future winners of the Jaime V. Ongpin Award for Journalism (or, at the very least, the bylines you'll be reading for the next few years).

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

RELAXING after class

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the people.
the minds
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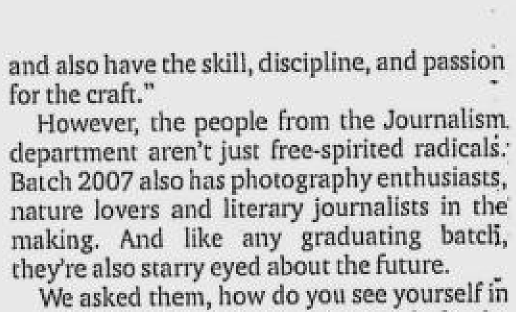
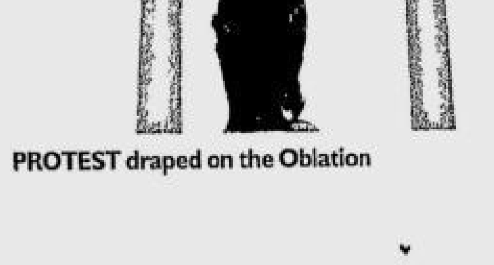


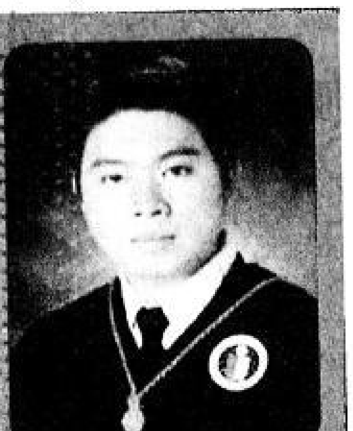
READING an issue of the Philippine Collegian

ALANAH TORRALBA



ALANAH TORRALBA

PROTEST draped on the Oblation



Kim Bartolome, 23

"The Artist"

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

Working in an established company and at the same time having a team of graphic and web designers on the side.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

I cannot see what I would want to do for the rest of my life. [illegible]

Earl John Caday Gallarde, 22

"Mr. Complete"

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

Good job. Nice car. Hot chick. Rest house by the beach. Daydreaming about the above.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

As a child, I always dreamed of becoming an astronaut and go to space, view planets from afar and visit galaxies. Well, we all know that's impossible, so I'll limit myself to reality. "I want to travel around the world" basically summarizes it all. I want to go to the best places on earth: wild beaches, deep-sea diving, mountaintops, anywhere!

Managing Stress

Luigi Onglao, [illegible]

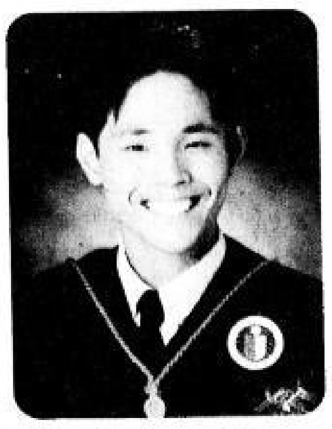
[illegible]

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

More than earning a living, [illegible] providing a stable source of livelihood to my fellow countrymen.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

Be a good provider to my future family, a friend who will truly go out of his way and do more than what is expected for his loved ones, a Filipino who will never forget his roots, a successful entrepreneur [illegible] who will never forget the discipline of analysis and numbers, a geek who will always be driven by curiosity to explore the dynamic face of technology, an Atenean who will always practice the Ignatian ideals of excellence and service.



Allan Espinosa, 22

"The Mad Scientist"

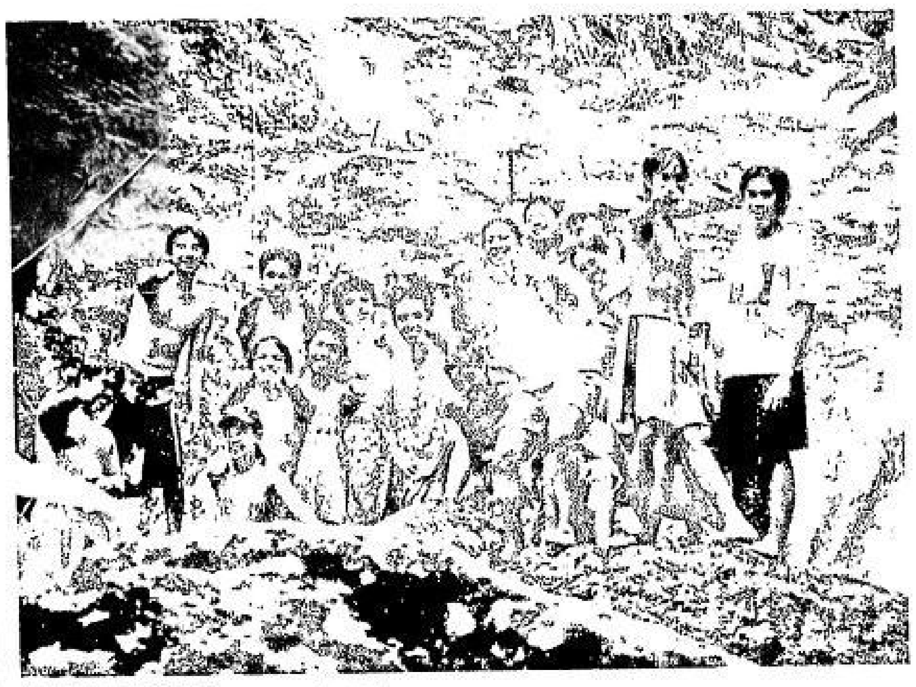
1. How do you see yourself in five years?

Finishing my graduate studies (PhD) in Electrical Engineering and making forefront research in the field of grid computing.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

Grade-school students usually have dreams about becoming scientists because of shows like "Sineskwela," and the fact that science is extremely hyped up in such schools. But as they grow older, they realize that they do not love the subject that much or science does not love them at all. Fortunately, I am one of the select few who still want to pursue such a dream. It is really amazing to know how things work. I like to tinker with stuff until they break or explode. A vocation to research in the field of science and engineering will probably make me stay in laboratories for a long time.

DURING a field trip to PLDT's Batangas Cable Landing Site



AT A BATANGAS group getaway

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AFTER thesis defense

Nonsensical activities aside, Onglao predicted, "I expect a number of Ateneo ECE batch 2007 members to be really immersed in telecommunications and microelectronics, occupying top positions in these sectors. Some would be actively engaged in the academe pursuing hardcore research and development work."

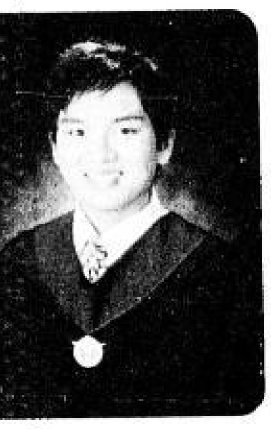
He continued, "I also bet that there would be a number who would be engaged in fields worlds apart from ECE like visual arts and graphics design. I am also sure that a few would prefer to chart their own path and set up their own businesses rather than be constrained as employees."

We asked the Ateneo de Manila Electronics and Communications Engineering Batch 2007 their dreams and aspirations. While we did get the usual answers about wanting to be top engineers, we also found creative dreamers, aspiring artists, future priests and entrepreneurs in their batch.

Find out what makes these Ateneans click, and read which one hopes to have a girlfriend in five years.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

Special thanks to Alanah Torralba, Ponce de Leon, Luigi Onglao, Karol Yee and Melanie Pinlac.



Jake C. Soriano, 20

Education committee head, Union of Journalists of the Philippines-UP Diliman

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

Five years from now, I hope I'd be doing investigative stories, working so hard I would not be sleeping the way I do now.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

I want to spend my entire life writing and teaching young people journalism, Salman Rushdie, and post-colonialism.

Mark D. Meruenas, 21

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

Five years, I think, is enough time to finally arm me with the skills to juggle jobs as a magazine publisher, a contributor for a news agency, and perhaps a media lecturer on the side.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

When I took up Journalism in college, I realized I could tell stories and literally go places at the same time. I see myself landing a job at one of those documentary channels I saw on cable as a kid. And I will spend the rest of my life perfecting the craft of touching people of different color and telling stories with different emotions through documentaries.

Timothy Joseph Decano, 21

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

Five years from now, I'd be working closely with species of the savannas of Africa and the rainforests of the Amazon. I'd be part of National Geographic, keeping people informed of that which most of us take for granted—the environment. I'd probably be the head of the environmental alliance we are forming now.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

What I want to do all my life is to continuously advocate the protection of the environment. Through writing (and by being part of National Geographic) I will keep people aware of the things we need to do to protect Mother Nature. After all, saving the environment means saving our lives as well.

Janice C. Ponce de Leon, 23

President of the UP Journalism Club

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

In five years' time, if I don't become a documentary producer, I would probably be working in a media organization that checks the ethical and professional practice of journalists.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

I'm so proud of the food I grew up eating at home. I want to own a restaurant that serves my family's cooking.

Jerald T. Uy, 21

Editor in chief, VOX 2007

1. How do you see yourself in five years?

As a scholar of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, I'm required to work for at least a year for the paper. Perhaps, if nothing goes wrong and if the paper still wants me, I'd still be working in the INQUIRER as gratitude for helping me in my college education. I owe the paper a lot, especially when I learned my father was not supporting us enough because of infidelity. Just imagine waking up with no lunch money and fare from Makati to UP. Because of the scholarship, I had also saved enough to buy a second-hand computer, which is really a necessity in my course.

I also hope by that time I've helped my family live better.

It's just unfair that my dad would be leaving me with a lot of things to fix—our house and our home. Yet a part of my soul also hopes I would have forgiven him by that time.

2. What do you want to do for the rest of your life?

I would like to at least publish either serialized independent comics or a graphic novel. I just love comic books—I took two academic electives on the topic. I have this fascination with superhero stories that present allegories to current social and political situations. Superman and Spiderman actually inspired me to be a journalist.

That's one thing I could just think of. Honestly, I don't know what else I want to do for the rest of my life. If you were in my shoes, you'd have to solve the problems at hand first, especially if the most basic necessity—food for the day—is your problem. Perhaps, when the fog is gone, I could have a clearer picture of what I intend to do for the rest of my life.

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Perfect endings

By Gmeleen Faye B. Tomboc
2bU! Correspondent

GRADUATION IS A HAPPY EVENT IN itself, but an awesome graduation party would be icing on the cake. After four years in high school or college, you certainly deserve a celebration. Here's a short guide for throwing the perfect bash for your batch or for yourself, or just a surprise party for someone who's graduating.

First things first, send out your invites at least three weeks prior to your party. You wouldn't want your party to get lost in the blur of all the revelry. If possible, coordinate with friends to avoid scheduling conflicts. Never schedule a party on the night of the graduation day itself, as everyone will be tied up with their families.

Blow up pictures of the batch or of the graduate through the years. Hang the pictures on the wall or use as table centerpieces. Include baby pictures for more fun. If you're throwing a party for someone, display his life-size picture at the front door or by the food table.

Try having a few games, like "pin the mustache on the teacher." Or stick the name of a teacher on the back of each graduate. You will have to ask each other yes-or-no questions only and then try to guess the name of the teacher by the end of the party. Don't have too many games, though, as the whole point of a graduation event is for everyone to just relax and reminisce.

Of course, any party would be more memorable if it had a theme. Try any of the following:

Off to college

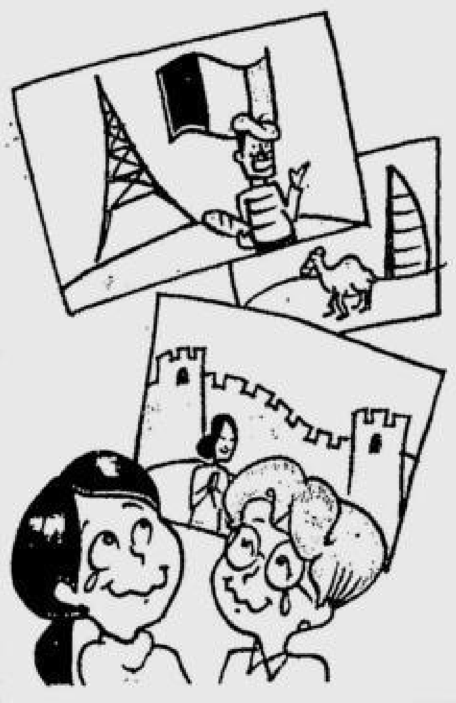
If several batchmates are going away for college or migrating abroad, deck the walls with college pennants and jerseys, or pictures from their foreign destinations. Buy a large Philippine or world map and pin labels on each graduate's destination, with the name and contact details of each graduate.

Luau/Hawaiian party

Definitely the most popular party theme, this is almost effortless to do. Attach the invitations to leis or pairs of cheap sunglasses. If you have a bigger budget, have the invites silk-screened onto beach towels. Scatter beach balls, Frisbees and lawn chairs around the venue. Fill up a plastic kiddie pool with blocks of ice. You can put your salads, desserts and fruits on top of the ice. Buy little umbrellas for the drinks, and set up a grill for barbecue, hotdogs and hamburgers. With reggae music in the background, play a game of Limbo Rock as the highlight of the night.

Wild West

Make the invitation in the shape of a sheriff's badge. Write party details on the back of the star, or attach a note saying, "Don't be an outlaw—attend the Batch '07 grad party!" For more mileage, announce the event using a "Wanted" poster featuring several prominent batchmates.



ILLUSTRATIONS: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

Graduation parties need not be boring affairs. Here are some tips for perking things up

Hollywood

Require your guests to come in fancy dresses, complete with feather boas, black ties and stilettos, or to dress as their favorite movie star. Arrange to have a luxury car parked in front and have them alight from it, straight unto a red carpet leading to the venue. Hire a photographer who will play "paparazzi" and take pictures of guests as they walk down the red carpet like celebrities. Encourage posing and "glamming it up." Sprinkle gold and silver stars of all sizes on tables, ceilings and walls. Before the party ends, display the glamour shots for everyone to see.

Disco fever

Relive the '80s (or the '60s or '70s) by requiring everyone to come in leggings, big hair and all things Madonna. Or you can set a glam-rock theme and encourage guests to dress as their favorite rock stars. Get defective CDs and paste the invites on them. Hang disco balls from the ceiling, play really loud music (or hire a DJ), and let everyone dance the night away.

Roast

This is especially enjoyable if the graduate being honored has a sense of humor. Have his caricature drawn or make a poster of childhood or silly photos. Ask his closest buddies to think of funny stories and to roast the graduate.

Lastly, no matter what your party's theme is, remember that graduation parties are all about memories. Whether you're looking back at them or creating new ones, prepare plenty of photographs and souvenirs. At the front door, give each guest a white T-shirt and permanent markers so they can sign each other's shirts. Play videotapes or display a PowerPoint presentation of pictures of school events while the guests are eating. Or create a photo backdrop and have all the guests stop by to have their pictures taken, prom-style. Put everything in a time capsule, along with everyone's favorite school keepsakes, and vow to meet again for your 10th-year reunion. With a little planning and creativity, you're surely going to breeze through your party just as easily as you breezed through school.

Passing on the torch: Lessons on respect and good writing from Nick Joaquin

By Bianca Consunji

THERE I WAS, ARROGANT AS young writers usually are, when Nick Joaquin burst the over-inflated shiny red balloon that was my head with a few well-chosen words: "There are no hack-writing jobs, there are only hack writers."

A year ago, I was a college sophomore at a turning point in my life, thinking of shifting to Creative Writing or Journalism after I emerged with top grades in the creative writing classes I was taking in school. At the time I was also starting to get published regularly in a major daily's youth section, along with other magazines as well.

Flushed with the first taste of success, I decided to pick Journalism, thinking that since I was doing well in Creative Writing, I could do the same in Journalism—after all, it was a writing course, too. But after a semester of mediocre news drafts, I began doing what most normal students would do after getting failing marks: I complained.

"These people in Journ are such dull, boring writers! I suppose typing straight news reports every day zaps the creative energy out of them, hah," I would say, shaking my head at the examples of journalism the professors showed us in class. "In creative writing, writers find different ways to say things—we create worlds for the readers as opposed to simply reporting the events!"

This went on for quite some time, until I went home despondent after receiving barely passing marks for News Writing. For someone who writes for a newspaper, this was a little more than embarrassing.

In an attempt to soothe my singed ego, I reached for a creative nonfiction textbook—a genre I took refuge in—and turned to the day's assigned readings for my Comparative Literature class.

Among the assigned was a transcript of Nick Joaquin's acceptance speech for the 1996 Ramon Magsaysay award in Journalism, Literature and Creative Communication Arts. It was titled "Journalism versus Literature."

The words jumped out like boiling oil from a frying pan, and stung just as much. "Eccentricity," Mang Nick said, "is such a temptation to the creative writer because he tends to be self-indulgent. In the Philippines especially, where so few read him, he may be tempted to indulge his fancies and foibles. He feels under no obligation to communicate clearly because he knows that his readers are mostly his own fellow writers and that he can play games with them."

He went on, "The so-called creative writer tends to be too subjective, too obsessed with himself. That's why I think every aspiring young writer should spend some years as a news reporter, so he will be obliged to step out of his own private world and to experience the world outside."

I considered his words. It was true that I enjoyed my creative writing classes because I was assessed by fellow writers, who could appreciate the pretended subtleties and witticisms of my work. We all had fun in class, and we were all so proud of ourselves for being clever and fabulous and intellectual—and, we perfectly understood each other's work.

But what about the readers of the daily which I also wrote for? Did they understand what I was saying, too, or was I coming across as just another self-absorbed, pompous wannabe who was lucky enough to get published? Was it my failure as a writer?

Worried, I compiled all my work. On one pile sat the "hard news," mostly stuff that I wrote for journalism classes, and on the other, the pieces I wrote for my literary classes. Stacked in the middle of both piles were my published articles in the magazines and newspaper.

I went through the articles one by one. Some I read over and over, proud for having written relevant and interesting features, while I quickly put down a few others upon reading the first few paragraphs.

Not too bad for a beginner, I thought, but was that it? Was I going to move on and continue with my hit-or-miss writing style until I got better?

Yes, the carefree college student in me thought. Hey, no one ever said epiphanies were easy to come by. So I went on writing my articles, getting good feedback on some, disappointing my high-school teachers (who followed the progress of my work) with others.

I didn't really care at first—I was, after all, writing for the lifestyle section, not the front page. I enjoyed going to events and meeting people. The champagne-bubble life was exciting—and best of all, I didn't have to exert much effort to write about it. The articles I wrote at the time sounded like press releases, but I didn't notice because I was having so much fun.

Then one morning, I went down to read the papers and turned to the entertainment pages, where I was besieged with a battalion of badly written show-biz articles. I read about Kris Aquino's latest beau, the contents of some starlet's closet, and Sharon Cuneta's weight-gain update.

How supremely *baduy*, I thought with a smirk. I wondered why anyone would want to read (or write for) the entertainment section when everything in it was always so tacky.

Then there he was again, Nick Joaquin on my brain, admonishing writers to respect their subjects. A young poet, he said, was scandalized because he once wrote about Nora Aunor, therefore making him a *bakya* writer—"But that article lives as one of the best essays on Miss Aunor because she was not *bakya* to me and I did not go *bakya* on her," he said.

"Every report," he went on, "must be done as if you were reporting on the parting of the Red Sea, or the Battle of Pinaglabanan, or the splitting of the atom."

I surrendered. Who was I to argue with Nick Joaquin? And what was I doing, forcing half-baked and halfhearted articles on the poor readers? From then on, I took Mang Nick's words to heart—while I'm certainly no Great Filipino Writer, at least I'm no longer writing simply for myself (or for other writers, for that matter), not writing selfishly.

I still write about fashion, beauty, the latest UAAP players and other such topics, but I try not to trivialize anything. There are still some difficulties, but at least I no longer roll my eyes while I write because I try to respect all my subjects to the best of my ability. And that change of attitude did more for me more than all the writing workshops I had joined.

Not surprisingly, the change of heart improved even my dismal Journalism grades—I was no longer determined to manipulate news writing to my style; I discovered that news reporting wasn't so bad once I gave my subjects the respect they deserved (no more "Don't the masses have better things to do than hold up jeepneys? Now we have to go and interview the hoi polloi when we could be writing poems! Why do we have to report this, anyway?"). And somehow, even my creative writing improved because I was less self-focused.

In his long and varied career, Nick Joaquin managed to reconcile the rivalry between literature and journalism by performing admirably in both fields, giving each side a chance to look up and respect the other. He merged the principles of journalism and creative writing in a sentence: "Good reportage is telling it as it is but at the same time telling it new, telling it surprising, telling it significant."

Nick Joaquin taught many young writers a lot of important things, tips on good writing, etc.—although I never had the chance to meet him before he passed away, I will always have him to thank for teaching me how to respect my subjects, and that literature and journalism can go hand in hand.

This is something I hopefully can pass on, from Nick Joaquin to me, to generations of writers who want to make a difference in literature and mass media today, and in the future. Change has never been needed so much as it is needed today, especially in mass communication. And maybe, just maybe, with Mang Nick's help, I can make a difference.

2bU! correspondent Bianca Consunji from the University of the Philippines-Diliman won the grand prize for the Ramon Magsaysay essay contest for the college level in 2005.

Write and win!

THE RAMON MAGSAYSAY Student Essay Competition, the country's premiere essay competition for students, is now on its fifth year.

High-school and college students are encouraged to send in stories of how a Magsaysay awardee inspired their lives. The 500 to 1,000-word essay should adhere to the theme "The Magsaysay Awardee who inspires me most: The Magsaysay greatness of spirit lives" and must be written in English.

Students are required to register in the 5th RMSEC's online submission page in www.rmaf.org.ph to enter the competition. After registration, students must e-mail their essays to rmsec5phil@gmail.com along with the code generated during registration.

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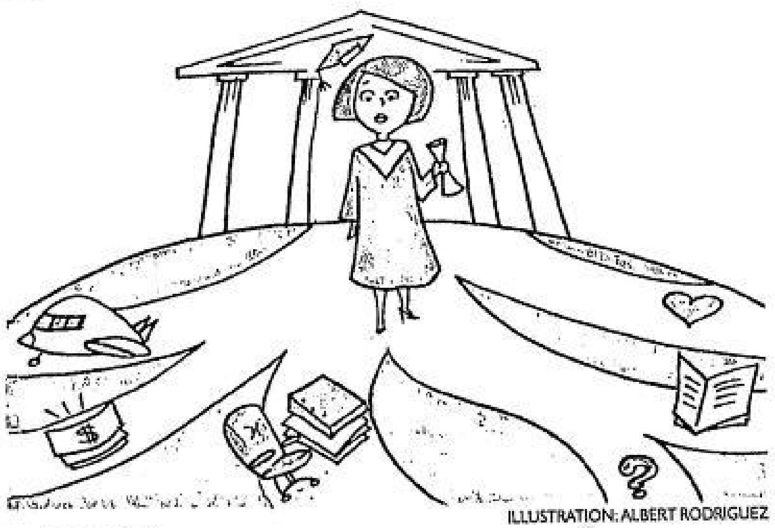

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

The real score

Here's what your valedictorian won't tell you in her graduation speech

By Pam Pastor

THE PATH ISN'T A STRAIGHT one. But they made you believe that for years.

Your teachers, your parents—they had your life mapped out for you. Kindergarten, grade school, high school, college, get your diploma, get your dream job, find your soulmate, get married, have beautiful children, raise them well, live happily ever after.

We wish it were that simple, but it isn't.

The path is crooked—sometimes very crooked—and it has a lot of twists and turns. The pit stops aren't the same for everyone, and sometimes, you will even get lost.

You will realize life is the adults' classroom. And this time, there's no teacher looking over your shoulder. Failed tests have real-life consequences and victories don't just stay on paper.

The real world has a lot of lessons to offer. You will begin a series of hellos and good byes that no class could have prepared you for. There will be pain,

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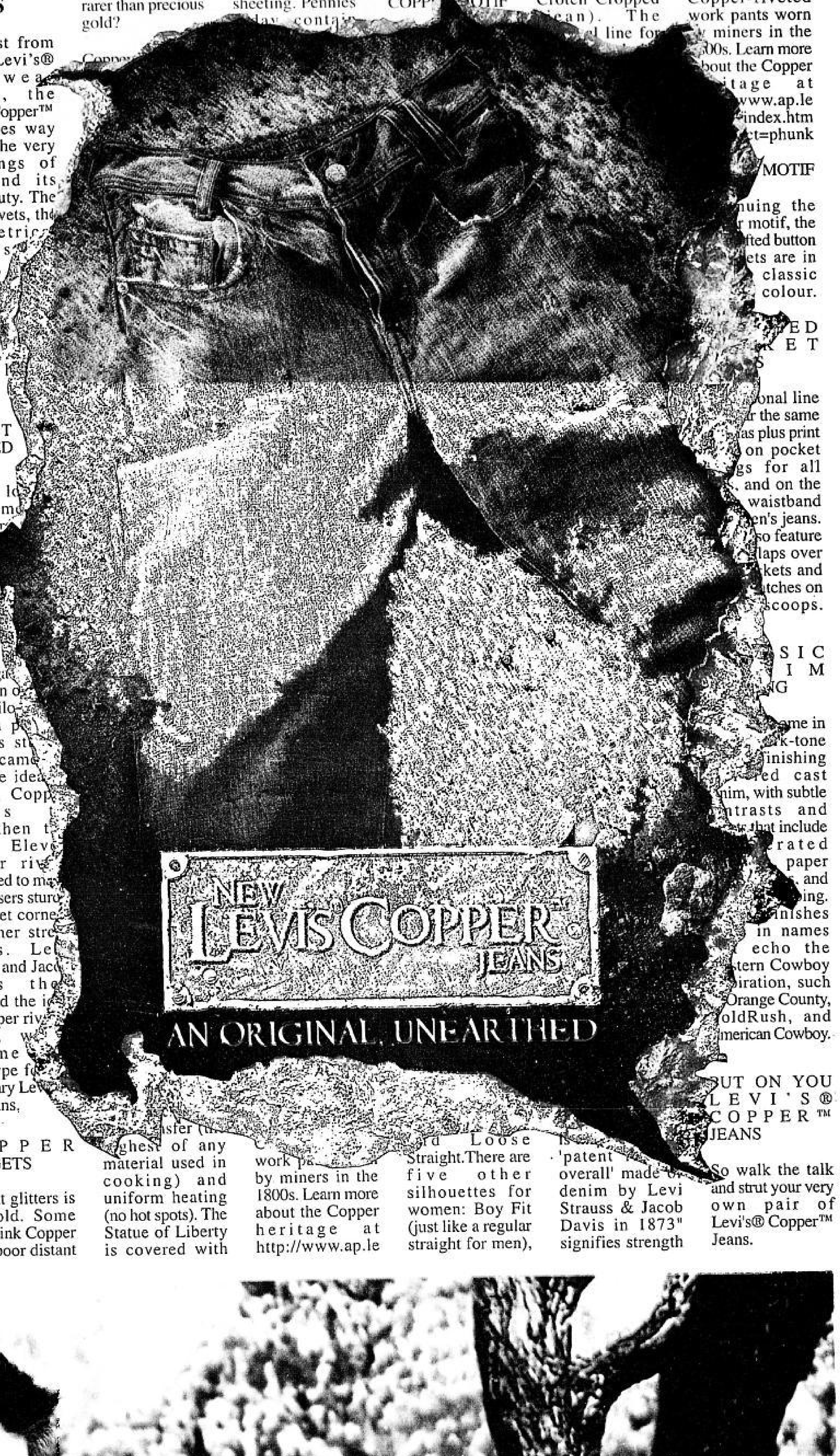

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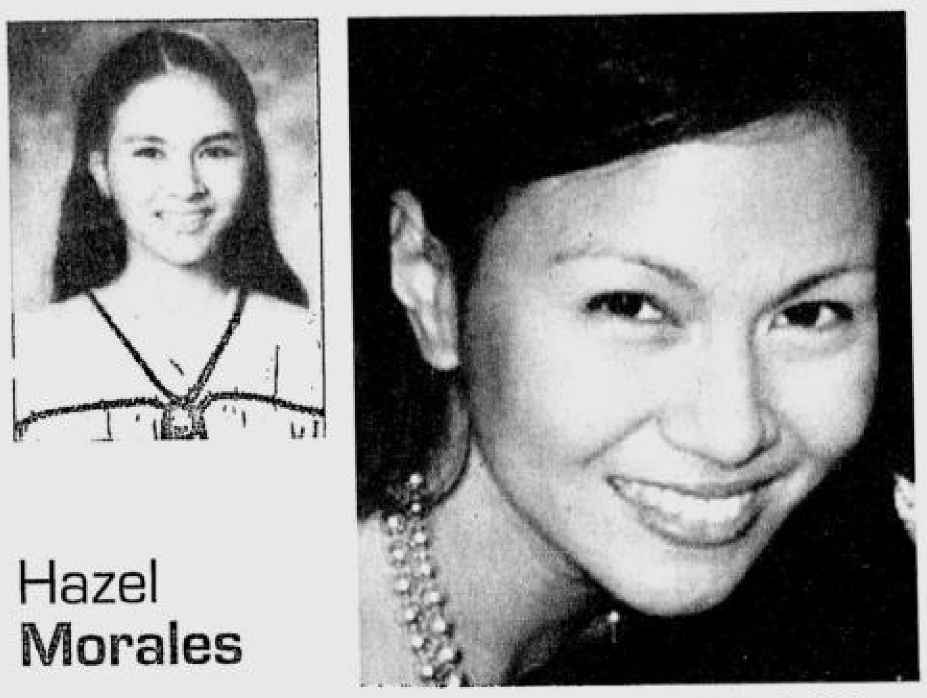
Jeifan Ira
Dizon

Graduated from Assumption High School in San Lorenzo, Makati, 2000

Currently a 2nd year law student at UP Diliman

"I use a brush more often because I now have lots of hair on my head! And, thank God, a lot more sense."



Hazel
Morales

Graduated from Ateneo de Davao University High School, 1998

Currently a key account manager for Nestle Philippines

"I've become more familiar with the intricacies of human interaction. What has stayed the same? I still think too much."

Diane Day
Escarilla

Graduated from Stella Maris

Currently involved with realty devel

"My high school life was terrible. I l
hurt me. I fight for what I believe in. I a
regret my mistakes; instead, I struggl
ures. I was and always will be a dream

WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE HIGH SCHOOL?

Revelations of the b

By Vanessa Arellano Doctor
2bU! Contirbutor

THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT high school is the most interesting (and chaotic?) in one's formal education. When 2bU! talked to people about the idea of a Then-and-Now piece, in which they had to give up their geeky high school graduation photos, many hesitated. Who wouldn't? High school, especially during this author's time (1998) and earlier, did not produce the best pictures.

In fact, there are only two words to describe them: rough and crude. But when we really think about it, "rough and crude" high school photos are things we should be proud of, if only to show that much has changed and improved. Some of us have gone on to become less materialistic and more insightful and practical, while some transformed from resident wallflowers to today's prime movers.

I myself graduated from Ateneo de Davao University High School in 1998. I am now less judgmental, but more straightforward (though I'm not sure if this is an asset or a fault). My priorities have changed, as well. I used to bother only with material things and image. Now, I even forget to brush my hair; although, I never neglect to pay my bills, meet my

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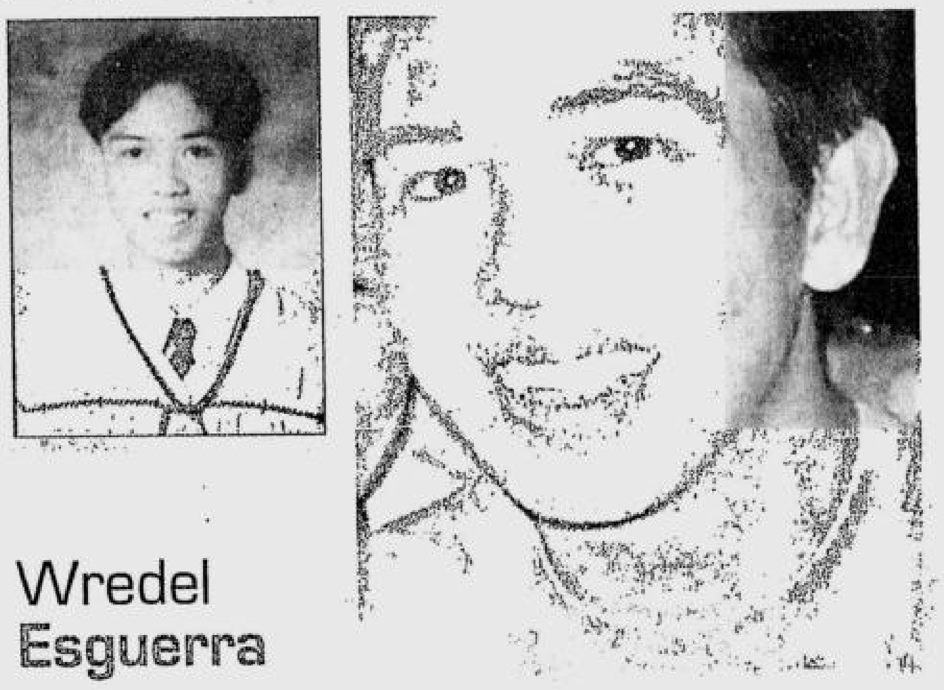
Noelle Frances
de Guzman

Graduated from Christian Harvest Academy, 1998

Currently an executive assistant for Manila Genesis Entertainment and group exercise instructor for Fitness First

"I've learned to kick back and relax more. My classmates from high school found me high-strung and demanding. I think I'm more mellow now. I had the reputation of being the biggest bookworm in school! And I still am."



Wredel
Esguerra

Graduated from Ateneo de Davao University High School, 98

Currently working for DOLE-Stanfilco as a research facilitator

"My priorities and concerns have changed. Now that I'm older, I am more accepting and understanding of certain things in life. I'm still very optimistic, I can still laugh at myself and I don't stress too much about life."

Gabriela
Lee

Graduated from Miriam Col

Currently pursuing an MA in Litera
der an Asean scholarship.

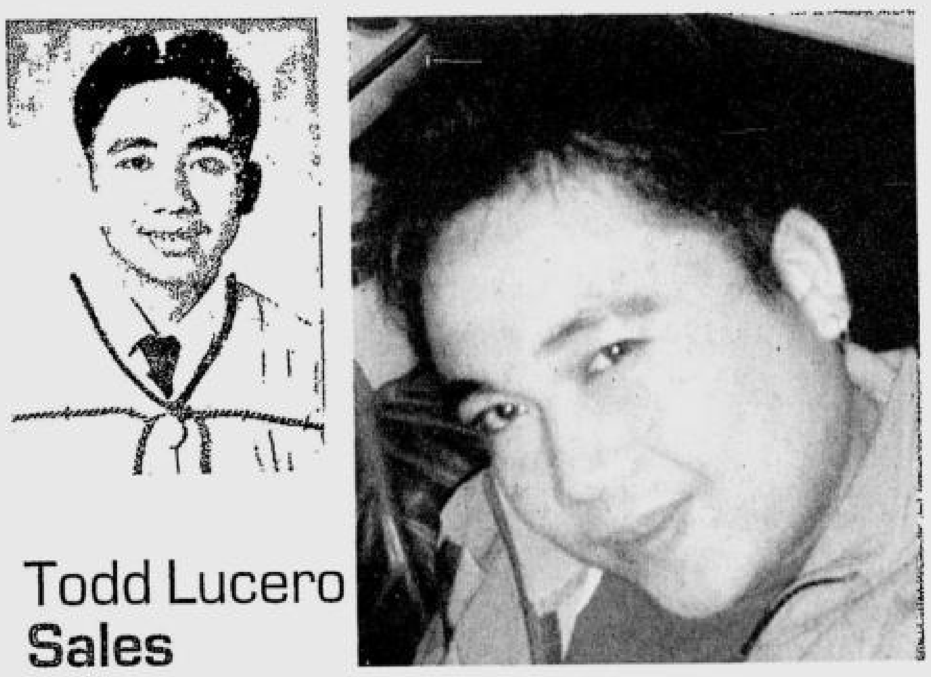
"A number of things have changed
dent in my abilities, and braver in tryin
the educational system in UP and in th
quently, there's also that part of me th
from the wide-eyed wonder that I use

Mitch
Hernandez

Graduated from Our Lady Of Peace School, Antipolo, 1998

Working for the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, addicted to Muay Thai, and taking Masters in International Studies at UP Diliman

"What has changed? The way I see the world around me, the way I handle problems, the manner by which I confront life's challenges, my views about work, my standards of success, and my perspective of relationships. No more crabbiness, no more seething, no more procrastination, no more complacency—just downright focus, determination, and strategic thinking."



Todd Lucero
Sales

Graduated from Ateneo de Davao University High School, 1998

Currently a genealogist, gay rights activist, and freelance writer

"I still love to eat and I'm still gay (I'm even out now, unlike some who have hidden themselves further into their closets). I am even stronger and more vicious!"

Kathyleen
Rivera

Graduated from St. Rita Col

Currently a processing executive fo
freelance writing and website design.

"My sense of style? I had none bac
me up. I didn't care much for my look
pretty. Now, at least I know what look
but I'm pretty much the same nerd, by
self, and have that same aloofness tha

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Academy of Davao, 1998

pment projects in Davao City
roka at the slightest comment. Now, words can't
lso never believed that there is a weaker sex. I never
to better myself everyday and learn from my fail-
er."

rave

deadlines and keep appointments.
ly graduation photo is not just a face
time (and preferably forgotten); it
ol of a fork in the road and how the
have taken has transformed us into
ons we have become. What has
since high school and what stayed
? Read on and learn (or double over
er) from these, er, transformations.

ege High School, 2001

Studies at the National University of Singapore un-

rom high school to college—I became more confi-
g things out. My horizons widened, thanks in part to
e various writing workshops I attended. But, conse-
t's become jaded and cynical, and very different
to view the world with."

ege, Parañaque, 1995

Hongkong Shanghai-Banking Corp. She also does

in high school. Mostly it was my mom who dressed
back then because I never considered myself as
o wear. I can dress demurely or show my wild side,
heart. I still enjoy silly games, watch movies by my-
all say is their first impression of me."

The real score

From page D1

all kinds of it, and you will wonder why you weren't taught pain management. Until you realize that's the very reason you have friends and family.

Soon, you will discover there's no such thing as a perfect anything. People are flawed, the world isn't fair, the good doesn't always win. You might get a job you love but doesn't pay well, or be stuck with a boss who will make your life hell. You may discover you have more than one soulmate, or that they don't exist at all.

In some cases, your soulmate might even screw you over. You may decide you don't want to get married, that you want to do something entirely different from the course you took. Or maybe, that you want to go back to school. Choose the road you think is right, the decision is yours to make.

Your ideals will melt, only to be replaced with wisdom as you continue the struggle against cynicism and bitterness. And you will survive, because life offers a lot to look forward to: things bigger than field trips, summer vacation and recess.

Spending your own money and being able to be the one to treat your parents. Discovering just how good people can be. Growing up with friends and seeing them grow with you. Curfew-free days. Making up after fights. First kisses. The satisfaction of knowing you're doing a good job. Endless adventures. The chance to help other people. Your ability to touch more people's lives. The possibility of getting promoted. Being responsible for yourself. Trips that take you beyond your comfort zone. Learning more about yourself. Making a mark on the world.

You will not always get what you want, things will not always go your way, but if you work your behind off and if you stay positive, you will come very close.

There is no single route to take. You cross this path armed with your map, your compass, your bottle of water, whatever your parents and teachers equipped you with. You have your skills, you have your lessons to carry you through.

But the biggest thing to remember is you are not alone and you will never be. There is always someone who has gone before you, someone who is right behind you and countless others who are walking, riding, flying with you.

You are about to start an incredible journey. Don't forget to take lots of pictures, mental and otherwise. Congratulations and good for you! The ride of your life is just starting.

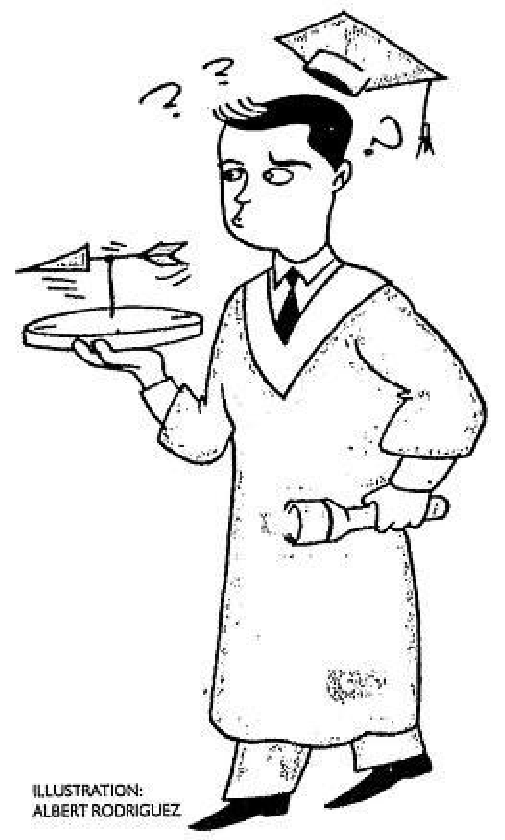
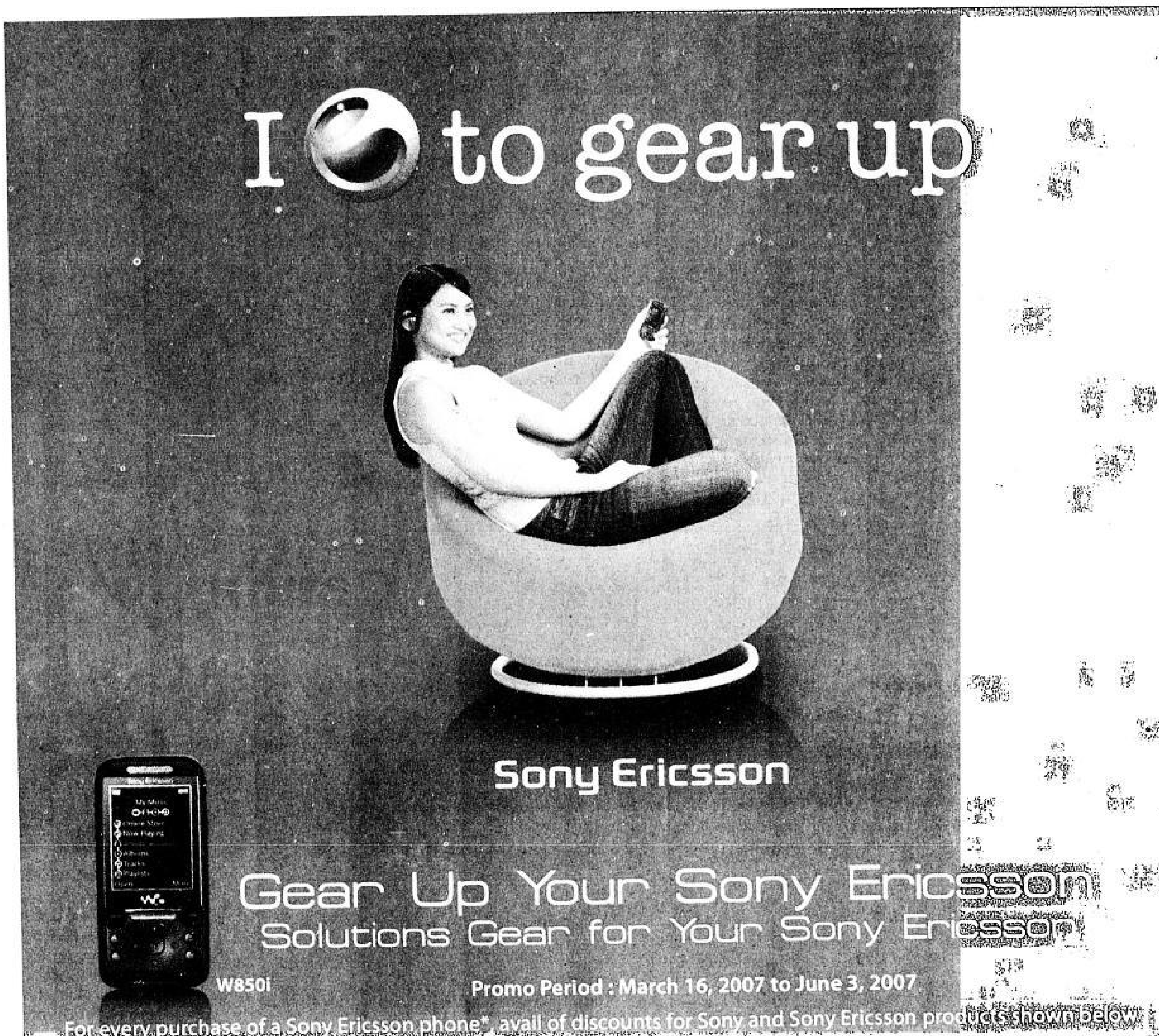


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ



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The journey toward a college diploma

By Arlene M. Paredes
2bU! Correspondent

I'M 27 AND A CANDIDATE for college graduation next month.

Plagued by personal issues and ruled by a scattered mind, I left the university when I was 20 to join the work force. Originally, my intention was to go back to school as soon as the issues that had upset me had been ironed out.

Turned out, however, that sometimes bad things could get even worse.

I was lucky because I found business owners and executives who hired me despite the lack of a college diploma. My course (BS Development Communication) and early experience in freelance writing certainly opened a lot of opportunities. I was able to work for several companies, explore different industries, meet a lot of interesting people and even hold important positions.

At one point, I was a supervising officer of a small but efficient team of college graduates. Ironically, it was then when I decided to resign to go back to school.

When it seemed to me that I had enough money for all the possible basic expenses of a regular student, I thought it was the time to go back to school. I had enough for tuition, as well as rental and utility expenses for the first few months.

My father and mother had died in 1997 and 2004, respectively, so I thought "home" could be anywhere. Moving to practically anywhere was one of the things I could do without much thinking. What would feed me in the next few months were several freelance writing assignments.

Some people ask me why I never worked for a call center. The simplest answer is my concept of a "graveyard shift" includes only spending time with friends, watching movies at home, surfing the Internet, writing articles or playing computer games.

Going back to school after working for six years is definitely not a walk in the park

GOODBYE!
EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Indeed, I've been lucky because in all the jobs I've had, I was able to practice what I learned in school. Still, I wondered about the other things that I could still do if I had the diploma.

Reality bites

Going back to school after working for six years is definitely not a walk in the park. The lessons came in one ear and out the other without leaving anything to memory. The schedule was tight because I had several freelance writing assignments, which translated to deadlines everyday. I complained a lot, and thought that if things got even worse than what I could handle, I'd quit.

Then the storm "Milenyo" happened. It swept my university (University of the Philippines Los Baños) like no other storm had done since I first got here. The campus had no classes for a week because of huge fallen trees scattered everywhere. It also brought knee-deep waters inside and waist-deep mud-water outside my apartment, where I lived alone.

Literally, it was the worst storm I'd ever experienced. Figuratively, however, I'd been through a lot worse than that.

So it occurred to me, if I'd been given the gift and the ability to endure trials and challenges in life, why should I quit?

"You were fine without a diploma," one of my friends said when I ranted and complained about the consequences of my going back to school. I don't know if he was employing reverse psychology or was simply speaking matter-of-factly. What I do know is that statement has never left my memory since he said it.

He was right; I was fine. And the good news was, maybe things could still get better.

AAAaRGH!
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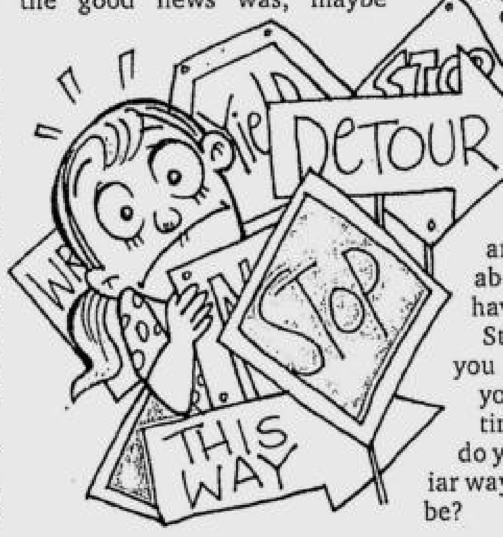
ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEPH BRAVO

They say life is never about the destination; it's always about the journey taken to be anywhere. The way I see it, though, it's about both—the journey and the destination—because you can't be fully satisfied by one without the other.

Despite this, however, I tend to be reckless of both until I get lost, or reach a disturbing but otherwise interesting point, commonly known as the stopover.



Stopovers come as interruptions in life. People perceive them differently. A stopover makes you realize that you're on a journey, you have a destination, and you have to go on. It can also make you feel tired, and entice you to forget about the destination you have in mind.

Stopovers can also make you rethink the path that you're taking. Do you continue on the same track, or do you cut across an unfamiliar way to be where you need to be?

Too many stopovers might have delayed my coming back to the path I'd begun before. But as vicious and emotionally draining they might have been, these stopovers have enabled me to go on.

As an incoming college freshman, it had not occurred to me that I would not graduate, or there would be circumstances to prevent me from graduating after four years. Perhaps I could attribute that to my inherent optimism.

However, some things changed. And some lessons were learned outside the school.

I now think personal issues, however serious they may be, should not be used as an excuse for losing interest in school—or any goal you have set in your life, for that matter.

At the end of the day, the issue is not about the layers of problems blocking your way, but how you find ways to overcome the blocks and continue on your journey, without blurring your vision of what you want to do and why.

E-mail the author at crypticmess@gmail.com.

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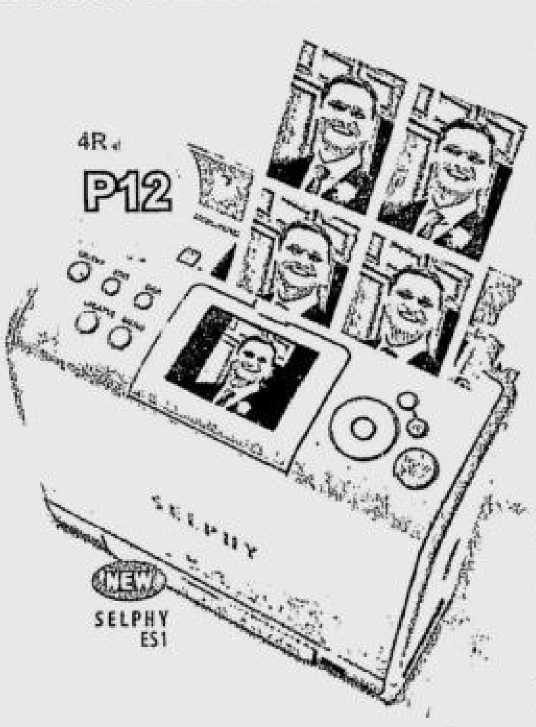

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Häagen-Dazs

CAP A GRADUATION lunch or dinner with a trip to Häagen-Dazs. The premium ice cream is treating Filipino graduates to its "You're the Best Graduate!" promo until April 3. Any three graduates can have special Häagen-Dazs creations such as "Sweet Success" for P450+ (dine-in) and P299+ (take out); "Chocolate Pleasures" or "Strawberry Happiness" for P299+. Graduates also have the chance to win two Nokia N91 and one Nokia N80 cellular phones from Globe Telecom. Families of 2007 graduates get one raffle coupon each by buying a 500-g Grand Finale cake for P900. The raffle will be held April 27 by Häagen-Dazs and Globe Telecom representatives. Winners will be announced May 21.

Treat for Batch 2007

MARIO'S KITCHEN honors the Class of 2007 with a special treat available until April 15. Graduates who dine with three or more companions will get one complimentary meal. Mario's Kitchen serves a variety of Spanish and Continental dishes alongside Filipino favorites at reasonable prices. Mario's Kitchen is at Robinsons Place, Ermita (tel. 302-0195) and Tiendesitas (6314367) at Frontera Verde, Ugong corner C-5, Pasig.

CASA ARMAS, one of Metro Manila's better known Spanish restaurants, has a special offer for 2007 graduates until April 15. The restaurant offers special packages at discounted group rates: P3,995++ (for 5-8 people); P5,995++ (for 8-10 people); and P9,995++ (for 12-15 people), all featuring various Casa Armas top sellers. The Graduation Package Special includes *tapas* and other other house specialties, like Paella Valenciana (saffron rice with mixed seafoods, chicken pork and vegetables). Each package comes with a free bottle of Villa Maria-Airen vino blanco. Promo is available in the Greenbelt (tel. 7574996); The Podium (6873663); and Jupiter Street, Makati (8973542) branches. Casa Armas also provides catering and take-out services.

GUMBO offers a "Graduation Promo" until April 20. For every order of main entree (with same or higher value) diners can avail of a free regular Chicken Gumbo, just present graduation certificate or diploma. Call 5560238 to 39. Gumbo is open daily from 11 a.m.-2 a.m. the following day.

BURGOO American Bar and Restaurant offers special treat for graduates. For every dining group of four, you'll automatically get regular Supreme Sampler (a combo of Burgoo's all-time favorite appetizers—Mozzarella Cheese Sticks, Buffalo Wings, Onion Rings and Sta. Fe Spring Rolls with Blue Cheese and Ranch Dressings) for free plus a surprise gift for the graduates who will dine. Just present your diploma or graduation certificate. Call 9277424, 6875254, 8981815, 7263578, 9127939, 5560091 and 6336256.

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KEEP your makeup fresh and light. Avoid dark colors, which could streak and make you look like a raccoon after the long ceremony.

Fresh looks for the graduate

Plan out your wardrobe and makeup before you get dressed for the graduation ceremony

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Ocs Alvarez

SO YOU'VE SUBMITTED your thesis and chased around school authorities to sign your clearance. It seems that nothing stands between you and that hard-earned diploma—except the graduation rites, of course.

Although the graduation ceremony is just a formality, it's a formality that you'd definitely want to go through (and look good for).

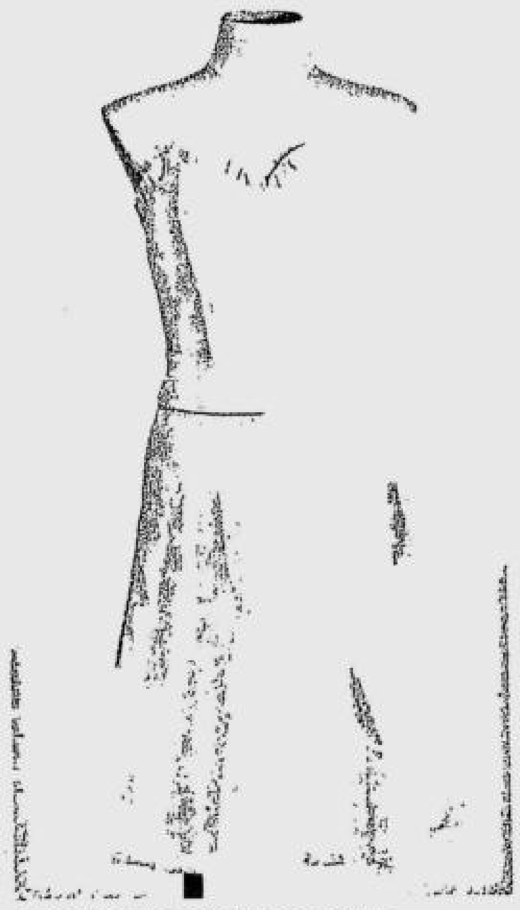
As many commencement exercises take several hours to finish (too bad if yours is in a humid outdoor venue), many graduates look harassed by the time they face the cameras with their diplomas grasped in their hands. In order to avoid looking like you went to the gym instead of your graduation, plan out your wardrobe and makeup before you get dressed for the ceremony.

First of all, check the dress code: Is your dress appropriate for the occasion, and does it violate any school rules?

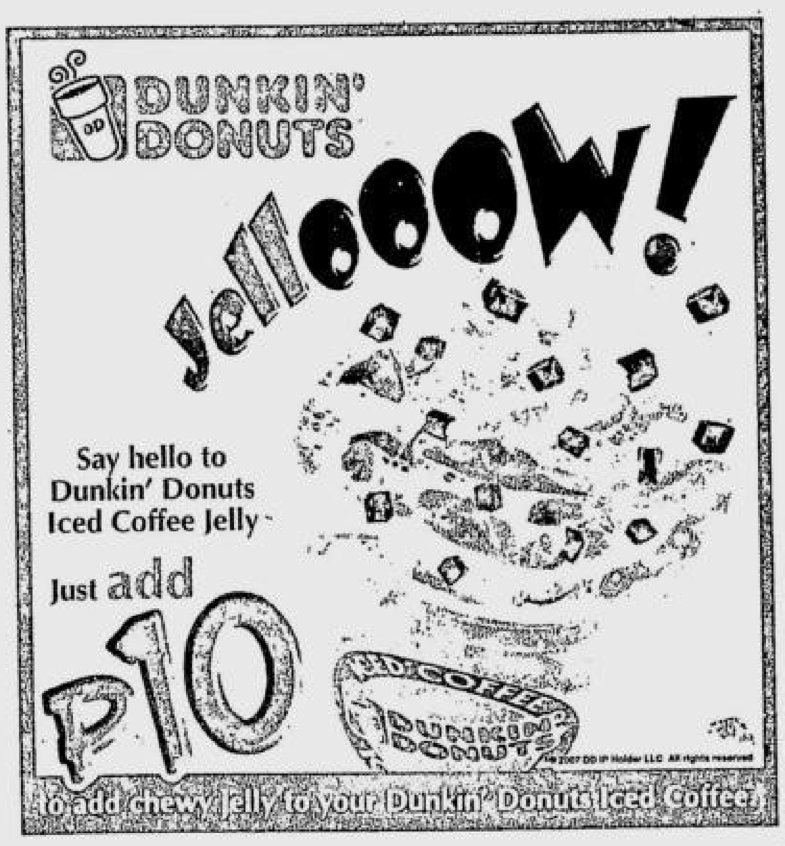
If the dress code explicitly says no sleeveless dresses, then there's no point in going for a strapless number when you won't be allowed onstage. Remember that the gradua-

FRESH/ E2

CREAM tulle dress with black piping, My Little Dress (P1,200; tel. 0915-3705731)



BUTTER-YELLOW strapless dress, Karimadon (P1,395)



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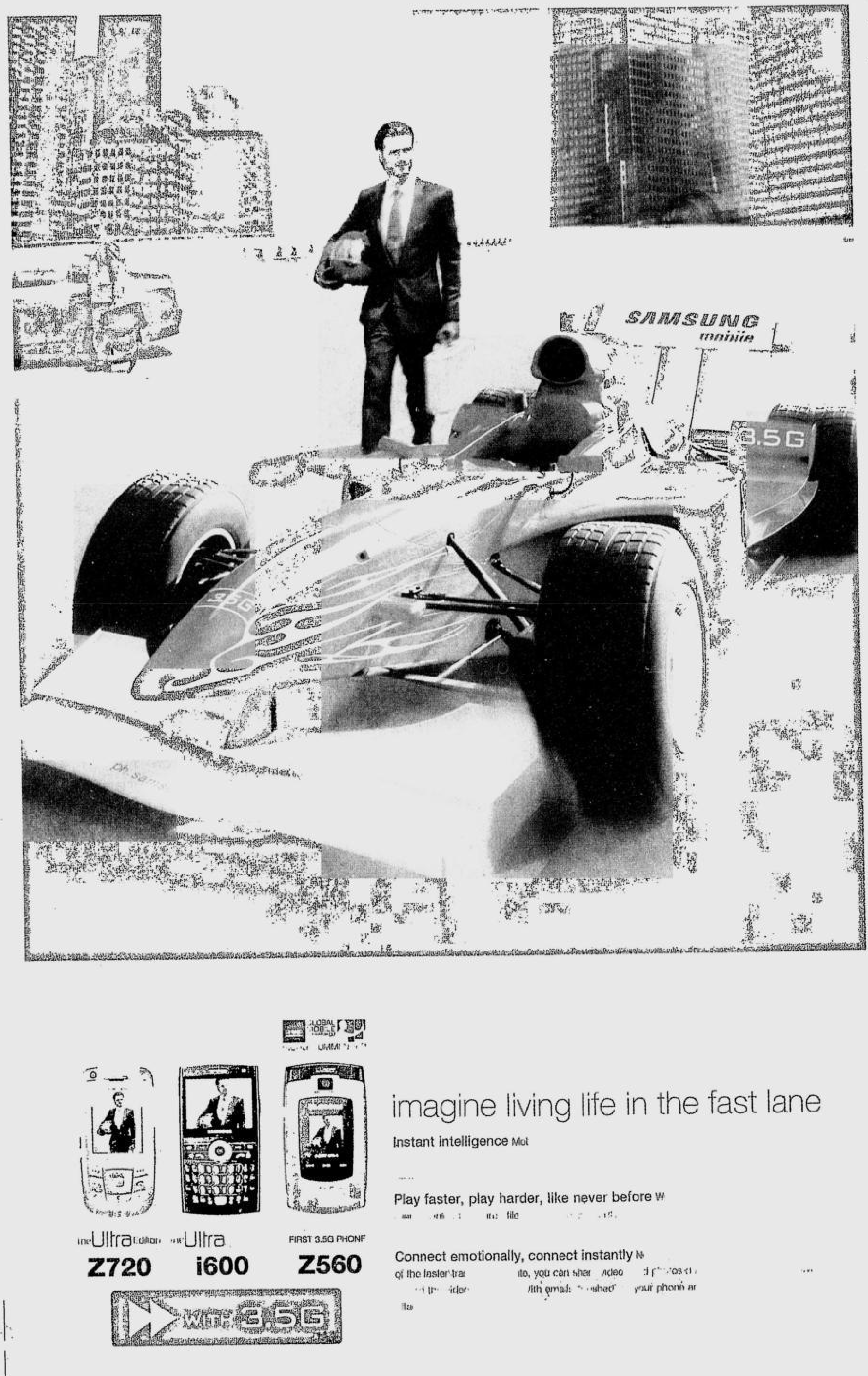

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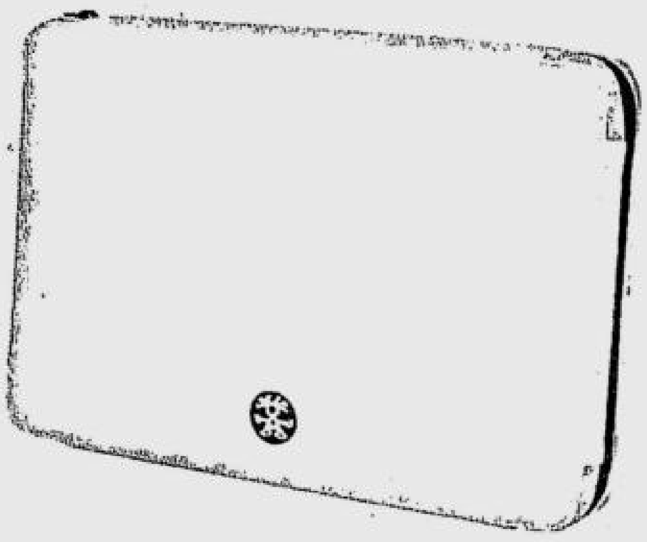

SCHOOL HYMN. This laptop sleeve has a super soft 1.2mm PVC outer shell and hard plastic central layer. Sleeve for 13" Macbook (P2,050); sleeve for 15" Macbook Pro (P2,250); sleeve for 17" Macbook Pro (P2,450)

THE SKIVVY. This versatile and water-resistant padded laptop bag with carry handle is way cool. Prices range from P1,950 to P2,650 depending on size.

THE LUNCHEON. This bag is water-resistant and has fully padded compartments (P4,950).

FAMOUS WINEBAR. This bag is spacio enough for two six packs of beer. A mus this summer vacation (P6,950)

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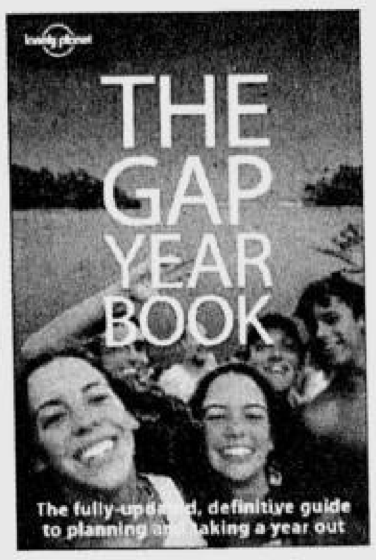

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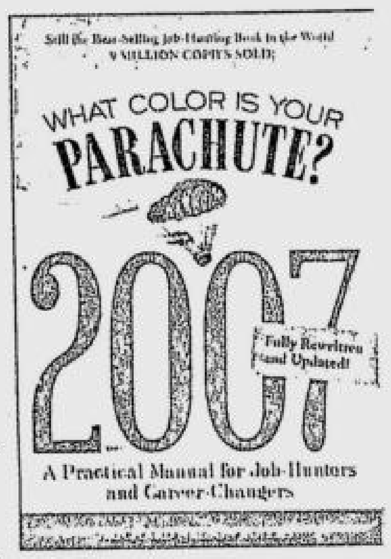

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Here's to you, gradu

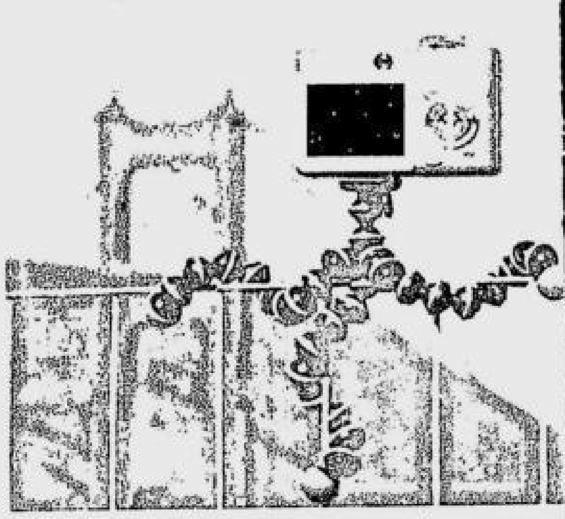
By Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent

Some great gifts for this year's graduate—our way of giving you the thumbs up for surviving school

A PERSON'S GRADUATI is bigger than his birthd After all, when you w born, it was your mom who did the labor. But graduating takes rious work—sleepless nig countless project deadlines, d ing with crazy professors.

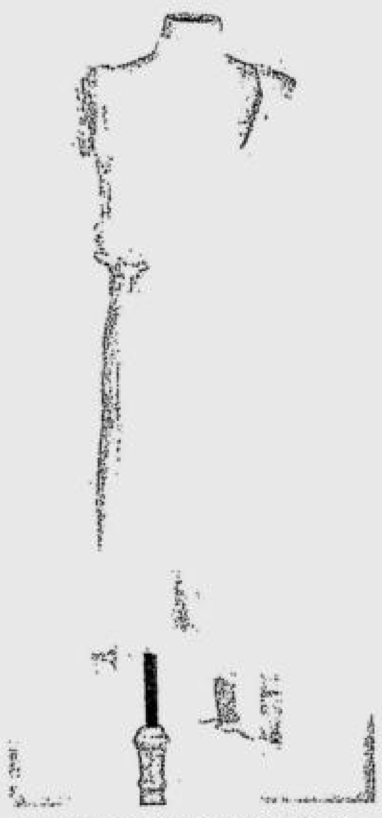
Here are some great gifts for this y graduate—our way of giving you the thu up for surviving school.

THESE bags from Segue will add a nice touch to a fresh graduate's first work wardrobe.



GORILLAPOD tripod allows you to take your own without using a mirror or the waiter. For orders, e- jan@jtphotoworld.com or visit www.jtphotoworld.

SPAGHETTI-STRAP black tulle dress, Ensembles (P1,295)



CREAM Grecian-inspired dress, Ensemble (P1,195)

GREEN tube dress with beads, Karimadon (P1,595)

CREAM dress with pleated neckline and beads, Karimadon (P1,595)

PLAID dress with ribbon, Karimadon (P1,295)

Fres
for t

From page E1

tion ceremony is a solemn occasion, and not a night out at Embassy.

If you're bored to death by the dress you have to wear under your toga or whatever official garment it is you're wearing for the ceremony, then stash a dressier outfit in the car for the dinner or night out that's sure to follow.

Match your dress with the venue. If you're staying in an outdoor area, chances are you'll be sweating within a couple of hours. Choose dresses with short sleeves and lightweight fabrics to minimize sweating, and keep accessories to a minimum (in short, no heavy gold chains which look better on your grandmother).

If you're graduating in a chilly auditorium, pick a dress with heavier cloth and wear a light cardigan if you

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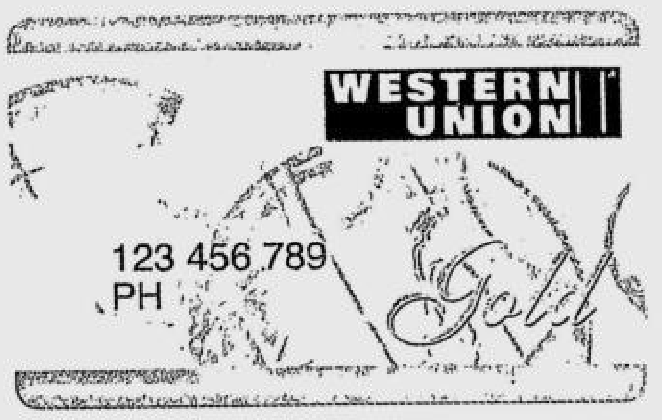

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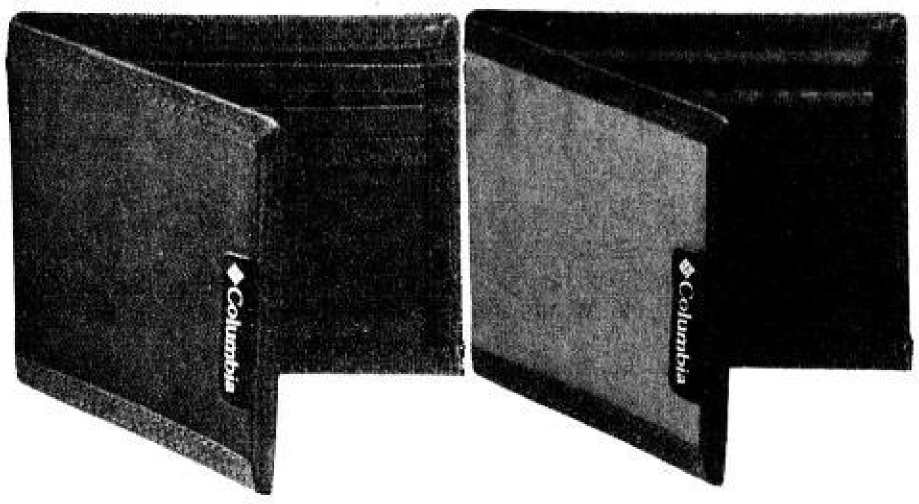

CLASSIC bifold wallet from Columbia Sportswear (P350). Gateway Mall

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HELP new graduates keep track of time with these beautiful watches from Morellato, available at the Morellato kiosks in Podium Mall and Rustan's and My Diamond, My Tempo and Rafael Jewellery stores.

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photos
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com.

THE word "tsubo" means pressure point in Japanese, so it shouldn't be a surprise that Tsubo shoes promise to be more than just footwear. They offer comfort, balance and innovation. Tsubo is available at Rustan's, Duty Free Philippines and Bratpack-Robinsons Place Manila.

h looks
he graduate

feel your toga won't keep you warm enough.

Pair the dress with dress code-appropriate shoes; a lot of schools require closed shoes, so pick a pair of pumps that you'll be comfortable in. The last thing you need is to fall flat on your face in front of all the students in your school, so leave the stilettos at home.

Makeup, while not necessary, can help you look good in the photos. Since you'll probably be looking at your graduation photos for years to come, go for clean-looking hair and makeup, and avoid overly trendy style (you wouldn't want your children to laugh at you when you force them to look over your graduation album 20 years from now).

Unless you want to look like a beauty queen circa the '80s, don't use orange blush and purple eyeshadow.

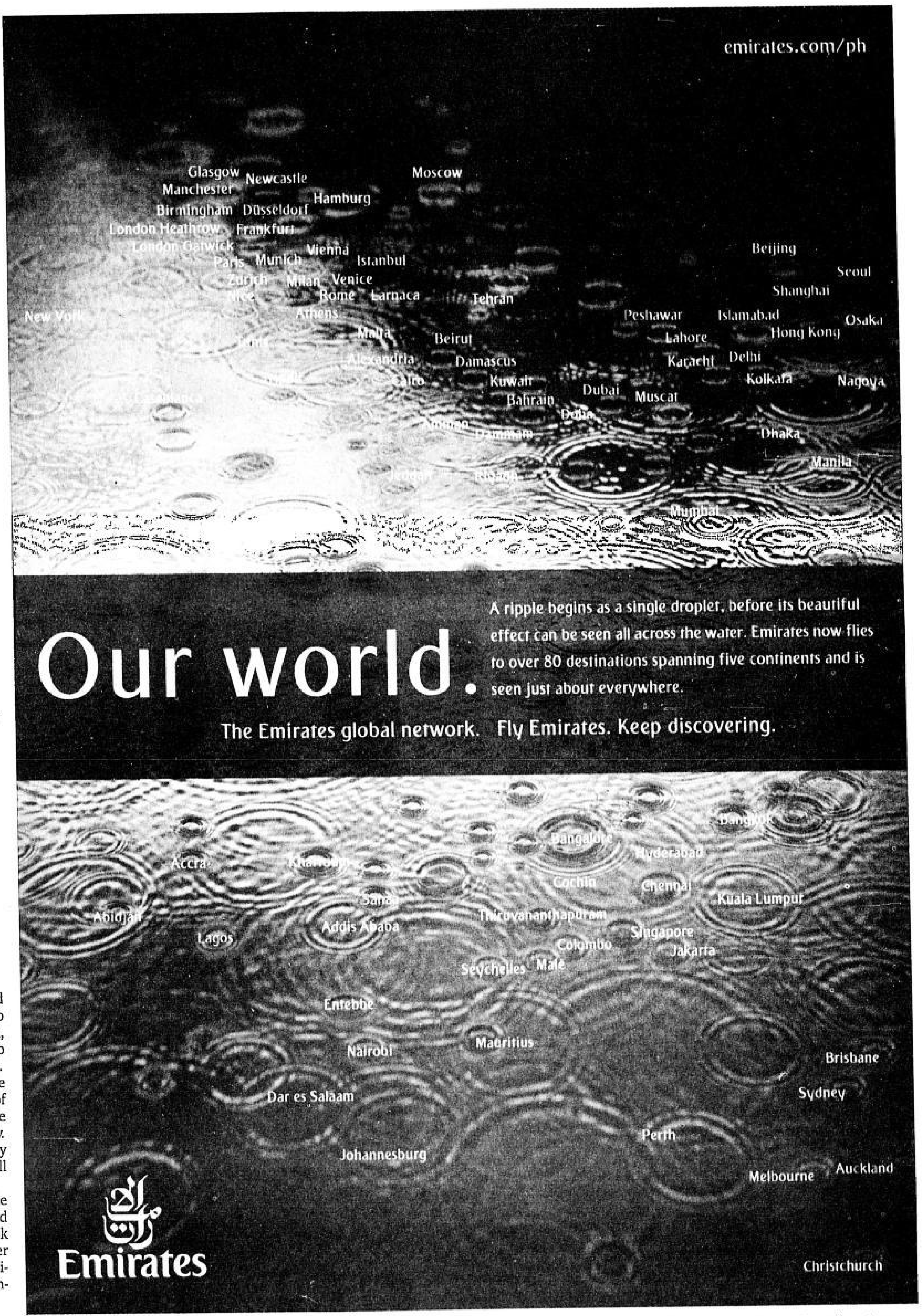
Keep your base makeup smooth and natural. Use mattifying products to avoid too many touch-ups in between, since you can't leave your seat to go to the powder room as often as you want.

Pat on a brightening eyeshadow, use a liner and swipe on some waterproof mascara. If you're not used to eye makeup, you can skip this part entirely.

Smoky eyes are a no-no, especially if you don't want to look Goth after all the crying.

Sweep rose-colored blush on the apples of your cheeks and use tinted lip gloss just so you won't look washed out in the photos. Shimmer and glitter should be kept to a minimum, as they tend to look like oil under certain lighting conditions.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com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FRIENDSTER is loaded with new features!

friendster.

Fun, fresher, friendlier

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Eli Agabin

JUST LIKE THE IDEAL BEST friend, Friendster—the Filipino's favorite social networking web giant—has recently gotten fresher, more fun and with even more features.

Firstly, there is the re-energized look of the modified profile page, which introduces a slew of updated network features such as the modules for new stats, activity, new featured friends and enhanced recent updates. The color has also been changed from orange to a laidback, easy-on-the-eyes blue.

Even the blog and photo modules have been tweaked so that it's easier to share with your friends success stories about your crush; complaints about your loud, grammatically challenged officemates; and pictures with your favorite "StarStruck" contestant.

Since Friendster is a big supporter of creativity, it now lets you make your site even more personal through the use of the new transparent navigation bar for page customization, which helps you upload themes or images.

Whether it's your recorded version of MYMP's version of someone else's song or a YouTube clip of a gradeschooler impersonating Beyoncé, content such as videos, audio, widgets, photo albums and links from other websites can now be uploaded in the New media "sandbox" of Friendster.

To keep you informed, Friendster also makes sure that you receive e-mail updates, birthday reminders and a redesigned newsletter—some of the best services offered by the company. Of course, announcements on new system or site developments are regularly posted as well.

Another addition is the fan profile, which allows people to quickly and efficiently build communities to promote musical acts, authors, actors, sports personalities and other celebrities on Friendster.

JEFF Roberto, marketing and PR director of Friendster, Inc., explains the new features of Friendster.

ACTOR Luis Alandy admits the site is very helpful in promoting movies, TV shows and gigs.

KITCHIE Nadal—who has a Friendster account—serenades the audience with her version of the Eraserheads original, "Ligaya."

BRAD Turvey

This feature instantly sends various types of e-mail to fans, triggered by the fan profile owner's activity. If that's not enough, fans can also find new fan profiles through discovery modules on the site and in the global newsletter.

Friendster is currently seeking beta testers for this new program, so if you're an actor, athlete, author, bar or club owner, blogger, comedian, DJ, events organizer, fashion brand retailer, film producer, journalist, model, politician, restaurant owner or whatever, and would like to be included in the beta program, you can send an e-mail to fanprofiles@friendster.com.

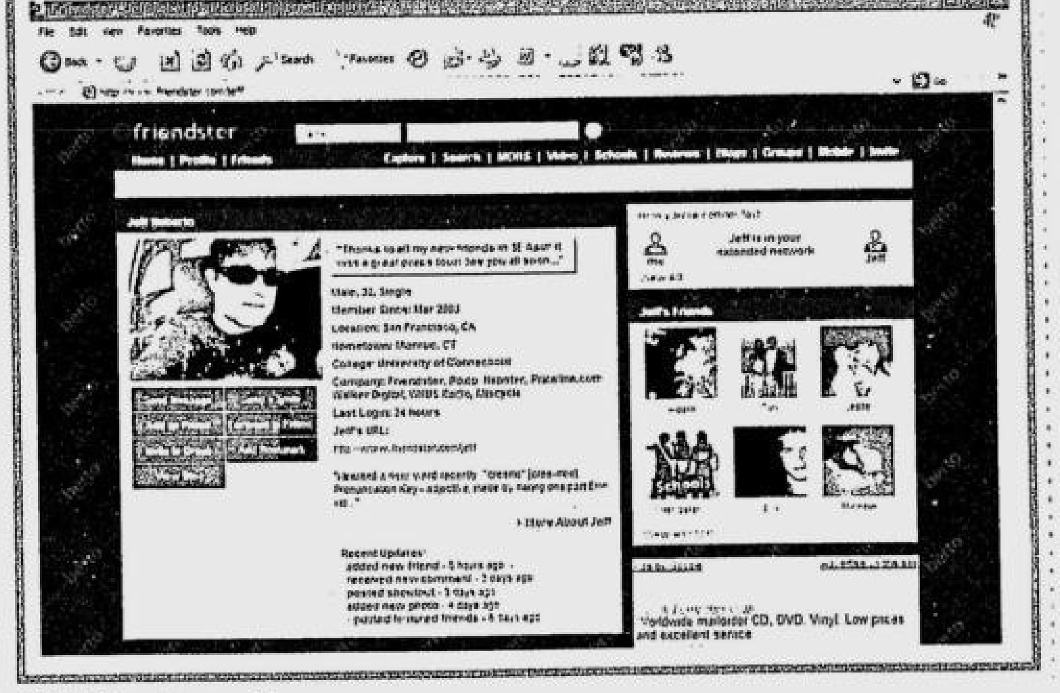
What else is new with Friendster? You can now promote your top six favorite friends on a personalized profile page. You can also subscribe to your friends and receive e-mail notifications about updates within your network. Best of all, Friendster has increased the speed and the performance of the site.

To introduce all these new enhancements, Jeff Roberto, marketing and PR director of Friendster, Inc., recently planed to Manila and proudly shared the good news with members of the press.

During the event held at MyCinema in Greenbelt, Jeff boasted of Friendster's success and the site's continuous commitment to its loyal fans, hence all the new enhancements.

SAM OH hosts the event.

JEFF in an interview with Eri Neeman of "Wazzup"



Male, 32, Single
Member Since: Mar 2003
Location: San Francisco, CA
College: University of Connecticut
Last Login: 24 hours

JEFF'S Friendster profile

Celeb Friendster fans such as host Sam Oh, Nancy Castiglione, Brad Turvey, Mo Twister and Kitchie Nadal were present and, apart from admitting they have a Friendster account, they also expressed thanks for all the help Friendster provides them in promoting their gigs, movies, TV guestings and shows.

Friendster, which began in 2002 as a simple social experiment conducted by entrepreneur Jonathan Abrams in Mountain View, California, had become the fastest growing brand in Internet history by late 2003. Today there are over 40 million registered users and 19.4 million monthly unique users coming from over 75 countries.

In the Philippines alone, there are 7.9 million Internet users with over 6.9 million visiting Friendster at least once a month, with most of the users checking Friendster accounts on a daily basis. That's a whopping total Internet Filipino population of 87 percent.

GAMELY answering questions from celebrities like Nancy Castiglione

Go click on the site now and discover all the great new changes Friendster has made to cater to the needs and wants of its loyal fans.

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

A conversation with Mr. Friendster

By Pam Pastor

THERE ARE FEW JOBS COOLER than one that allows you to help people reconnect with old friends and discover new ones.

Jeff Roberto, marketing and PR director for Friendster, Inc. is one of the lucky few who can say they do this for a living.

Jeff, who has over 10 years of experience in managing marketing programs in social media, e-commerce and product development, was recently in Manila to spread the good news about exciting new things that are happening on Friendster.com.

We sat down with him and talked about Friendster and how active Pinoys are on their favorite website.

Tell us how Friendster started.

It was founded in 2002 by Jonathan Abrams in Mountain View California. It was a social experiment. He wasn't meeting the right people on online dating sites. He thought, he has friends and his friends probably has friends. And he thought of Friendster as a better way to meet people, using his friends' network. Today we have over 40 million registered users and 19.4 million unique monthly users from over 75 countries. That means about half of them come back at least once a month.

How much traffic comes from the Philippines?

There are 7.9 million users in the Philippines and 6.9 million are visiting once a month. The top 10 countries that account for the daily traffic include the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, United States, Singapore, Norway, Canada, Australia, Great Britain and Hong Kong. Seventy percent of traffic comes from Southeast Asia. Users here are very active. Users from the Philippines are logging in more times in a day or in a week than the average user worldwide.

But what about registered users?

When it comes to registered users, it's one-third US, one-third Southeast Asia and one-third everywhere else.

A lot of people here make fake accounts for celebrities.

Yeah, that's another thing we have to deal with.

It used to be 500, but what is the friends limit now?

A thousand. But even that is not enough for some people so we will be increasing that soon.

And for photos?

The limit is still 50. But again, that's not enough for some people, so we are working on a way to increase that. We'll probably do that in stages.

I remember that day you turned on the Who's Viewed Me feature. People freaked out.

That was Black Friday. Our traffic went up that day. Everybody logged in. Now we're very careful about how we launch features because we don't want to upset anyone.

Did people complain?

Yeah, we received some very negative press. But then it turned positive. They were like: "Oh now I can see who's viewed me." Some bloggers were saying: "Oh my god, my ex-girlfriend from two years ago was checking me out but I'm married now. What's going on?"

That day was so funny.

I think in social network groups, there's really that voyeuristic thing going on.

What else is new for Friendster users? ***(See related story.)***

New photo module, new blog module, we've added schools as well. There will also be fan profiles soon. Profiles are easier to customize now. They can share video content with just one click.

Will it be possible for users with different e-mail addresses to one day use all of them for just one account? Because it's hard when people keep sending Friendster invites to different e-mail addresses.

Yeah, that's another big one. We're looking into that.

Do people know if you reject their Friendster invite?

No. But they'll get the hint if you never show up on their page.

People here have a nice way of doing it. They approve the person first and then delete them later.

(Laughter) That's something new. We should turn that into a T-shirt.

Are you planning to add any more modifications to relationship status? Do you realize that "It's complicated" has become such a big deal?

We actually have a trademark on that. We should do a whole status line of shirts.

Cool! Do you know that some people find out about their friends' or relatives' sexuality through Friendster?

(Laughter) We get that, too. But for us, if you have something to hide, if you don't want to be seen, then you shouldn't be on a social networking site.

Search for youth song and youth band

GLOBE KANTABATAAN, A SONGWRITING contest and band search organized by Globe Telecoms, goes nationwide this year.

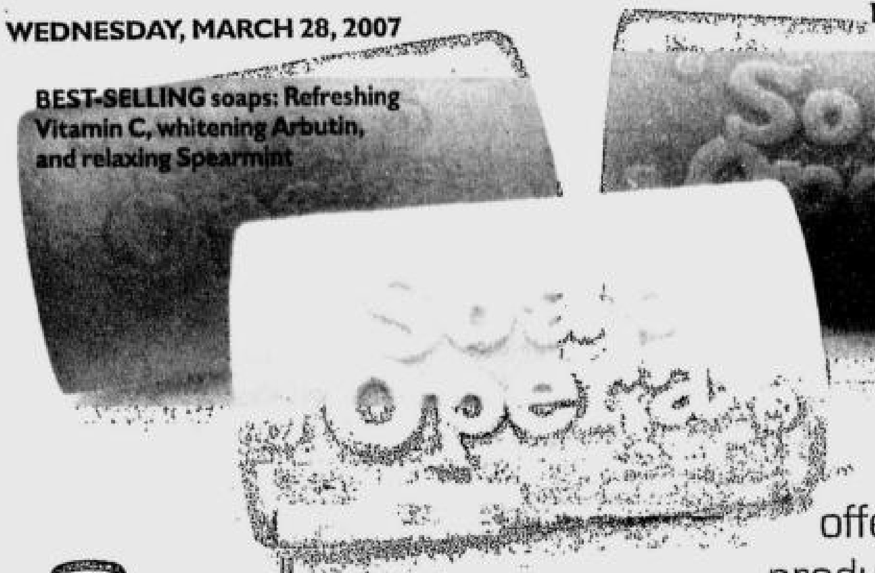
Grand Star Dreamer Yeng Constantino is endorser.

The top five finalists will not only compete live on national TV, but will also have their songs aired over the radio. Winners will get a chance to train at the Kantabataan Musicademy in Manila; star in their own music video; get makeover sessions from Penshoppe; own Nokia 5300 XpressMusic phones; and win cash prizes. Up to P1 million in cash and gifts will be given away.

Amateur youth bands must submit a copy of the lyrics and demos of their original songs incorporating keywords such as "Posible" and "Lakas," in accordance with the theme "Isang Tinig ng Kabataan para sa AYT na Kinabukasan," by May 20, to any Globe Telecom Business Centers or to kantabataan@globetel.com.ph.

The competition is open to existing Globe and Touch mobile subscribers for groups of three to five members aged 12-24 years old. Both the composer and lyricist should be part of the band. Entry forms can be downloaded from the Globe Kantabataan website.

Text KANTA to 2346 for free or visit www.kantabataan.com.ph.



BEST-SELLING soaps: Refreshing Vitamin C, whitening Arbutin, and relaxing Spearmint

Sudsy treats

Soap Opera offers bath products that can make you feel like a true soap opera queen

By Maui Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

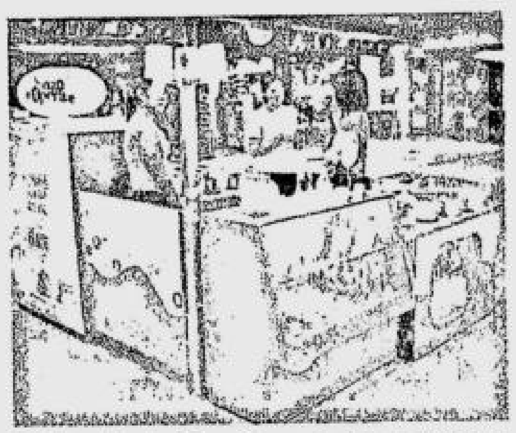
A TRUE DIVA CAN NEVER HAVE TOO MANY bath and beauty products. That's why there's Soap Opera, a shop to satisfy vanity addiction.

Soap Opera's inspiration comes from anything and everything "pop culture." This explains the pun-ny names such as "Berry Bunch" (a super yummy-scented strawberry body butter that doubles as a natural astringent and pore minimizer), "Zapped!" (the acne-control tea tree line), and "Growing Manes" (a hair grower shampoo that helps thicken hair).

The after-bath splash even takes on names of TV shows with powerful femmes—"Charmed," "Bewitched," and "Sabrina." And the bubble-gum pink kiosk is adorned with an illustration of '50s pin-up girl soaking in a tub.

Formulated and clinically tested by the store's in-house chemist and dermatologist, Soap Opera's products—which include soaps, spray, after-bath splash, bath and shower gels, bath salts and scrubs, lip balm, and various foot products—are made of ingredients imported from Switzerland.

Our fave products? "Honey Mooners," body butter made of Honey and Goat's Milk (hypoallergenic moisturizer that leaves our skin as smooth as a baby's bum!), "Blockbuster," a tinted moisturizer with SPF 45, and "Sugar Rush," exfoliating bath salts with shea butter (exfoliate and moisturize at the same time!).



YOU can't miss Soap Opera's pink mall kiosk!

Also on our list is the "Purple Rain" line, a mixture of grape seed and lavender that's as soothing as a certain singer's voice.

Want to feel like a true soap opera drama queen? Pick up a few Soap Opera Bath products at its kiosk at the 2nd floor of SM Megamall Building A, or e-mail soapoperastar@gmail.com.

No doubt that after each shower, you'll be ready for your close-up.

Win goodie bags!

The gorgeous gals at Soap Opera Bath Shop gave us goodie bags to give away to three lucky drama queens. Just e-mail us who your favorite drama queen is and why. Send in your answer along with your name, address, and contact number to ls_2bu@inquirer.com.ph with the subject "Soap opera" on or before March 31.

going for the trend!

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"With Sun, Hen Lin keeps the siomai coming—we never lose any steam!"
Francis Manas, Division Manager, Hen Lin

"Our phone bill used to cost so much, but now, thanks to Sun, I keep in touch with my employees 24/7 and keep within budget."

"My parents never expected it to grow this big!" Francis shares. What started out as a hobby of his parents 24 years ago has now grown into a nationwide fastfood chain. With business this big, instant communication to all the branches becomes all the more vital—and costly. What's more, 80% of Hen Lin's stores are carts or kiosks, and therefore, cannot be connected with landlines.

That's why Hen Lin has been using Sun for almost two years now. Before, branch supervisors were always worried about text messaging and call time costs. But now things are different with the 24/7 Call and Text Unlimited service of Sun.

"Sun makes it easy," Francis says, "to disseminate information quickly and efficiently with minimal cost." Daily deliveries, for example, have to run like clockwork. If a truck is late, the stock in the store might not be enough to meet the day's demand. Freezers and steamers also need to be serviced immediately. Thanks to Sun, supervisors can move quickly—without having to worry about call time charges.

With a demanding, fast-paced business such as Hen Lin, the cost-efficient and innovative plans of Sun is the ideal solution. Francis smiles, "In the food and restaurant business, everyone is our competitor—we're all fighting to fit in one stomach!"

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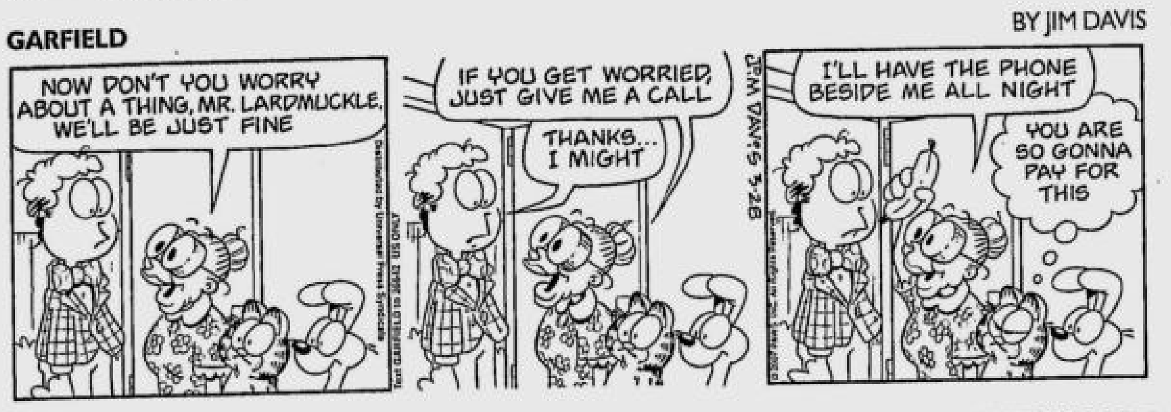
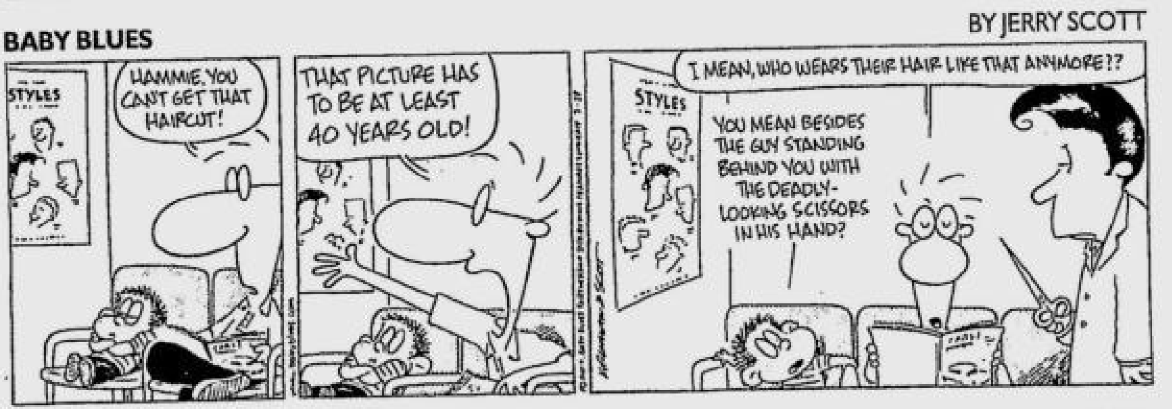
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


NOW DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT A THING, MR. LARDMUCKLE. WE'LL BE JUST FINE
IF YOU GET WORRIED, JUST GIVE ME A CALL
THANKS... I MIGHT
JIM DAVIS 3-28
I'LL HAVE THE PHONE BESIDE ME ALL NIGHT
YOU ARE SO GONNA PAY FOR THIS

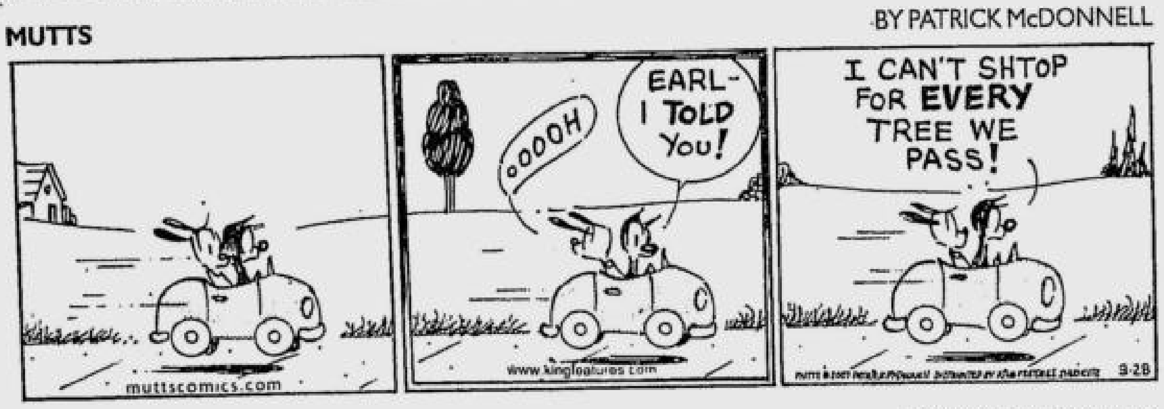
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


STYLES
HAMMIE, YOU CAN'T GET THAT HAIRCUT!
THAT PICTURE HAS TO BE AT LEAST 40 YEARS OLD!
I MEAN, WHO WEARS THEIR HAIR LIKE THAT ANYMORE??
STYLES
YOU MEAN BESIDES THE GUY STANDING BEHIND YOU WITH THE DEADLY-LOOKING SCISSORS IN HIS HAND?

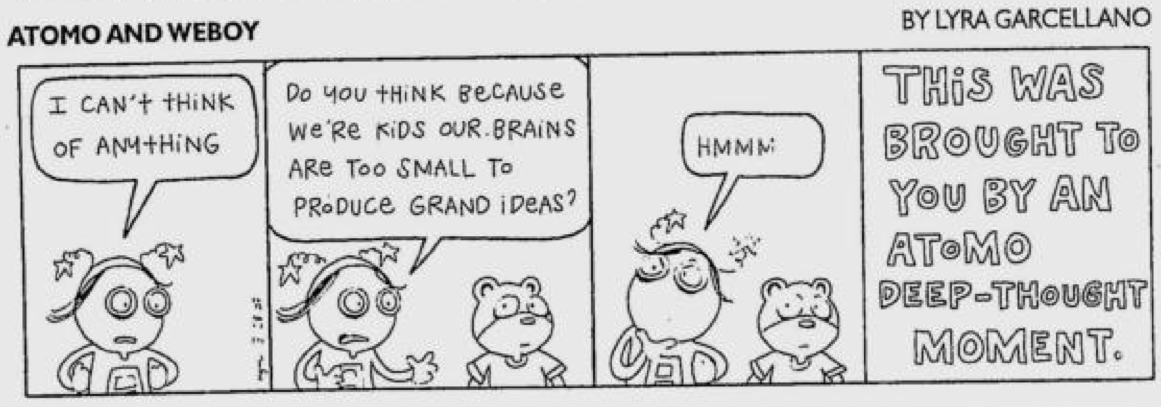
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


muttscomics.com
OOOOH
EARL- I TOLD YOU!
www.kingfeatures.com
I CAN'T SHTOP FOR EVERY TREE WE PASS!
3-28

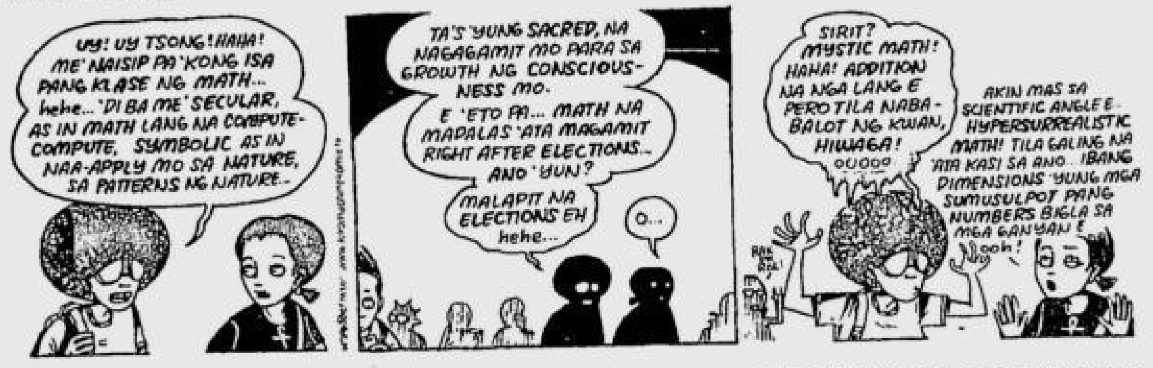
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING
DO YOU THINK BECAUSE WE'RE KIDS OUR BRAINS ARE TOO SMALL TO PRODUCE GRAND IDEAS?
HMMM
THIS WAS BROUGHT TO YOU BY AN ATOMO DEEP-THOUGHT MOMENT.

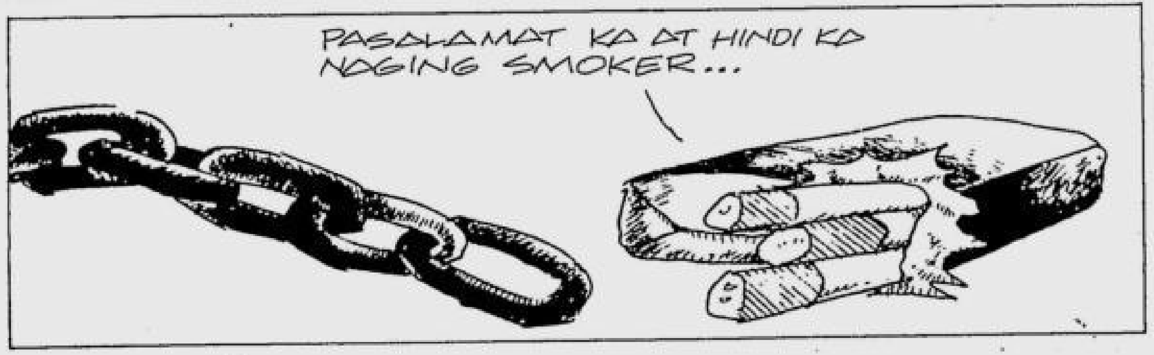
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


UY! UY TSONG! HAHA! ME' NAISIP PA 'KONG ISA PANG KLASE NG MATH... hehe... 'DI BA ME' SECULAR, AS IN MATH LANG NA COMPUTE-COMPUTE, SYMBOLIC AS IN NAA-APPLY MO SA NATURE, SA PATTERNS NG NATURE..
TA'S 'YUNG SACRED, NA NAGAGAMIT MO PARA SA GROWTH NG CONSCIOUSNESS MO.
E 'ETO PA... MATH NA MADALAS 'ATA MAGAMIT RIGHT AFTER ELECTIONS... ANO 'YUN?
MALAPIT NA ELECTIONS EH hehe...
O...
SIRIT? MYSTIC MATH! HAHA! ADDITION NA NGA LANG E PERO TILA NABA-BALOT NG KWAN, HIWAGA! OUOOO
AKIN MAS SA SCIENTIFIC ANGLE E.. HYPERSURREALISTIC MATH! TILA GALING NA 'ATA KASI SA ANO.. IBANG DIMENSIONS 'YUNG MGA SUMUSULPOT PANG NUMBERS BIGLA SA MGA GANYAN E Wooh!

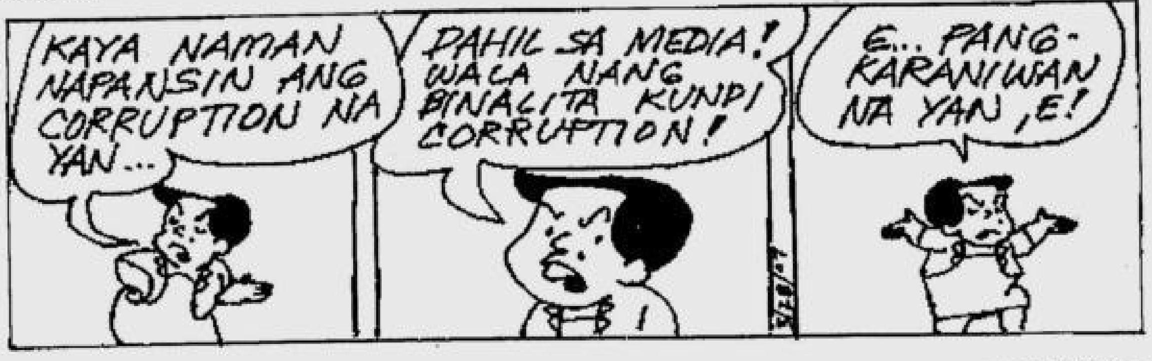
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


PASALAMAT KA AT HINDI KA NAGING SMOKER...

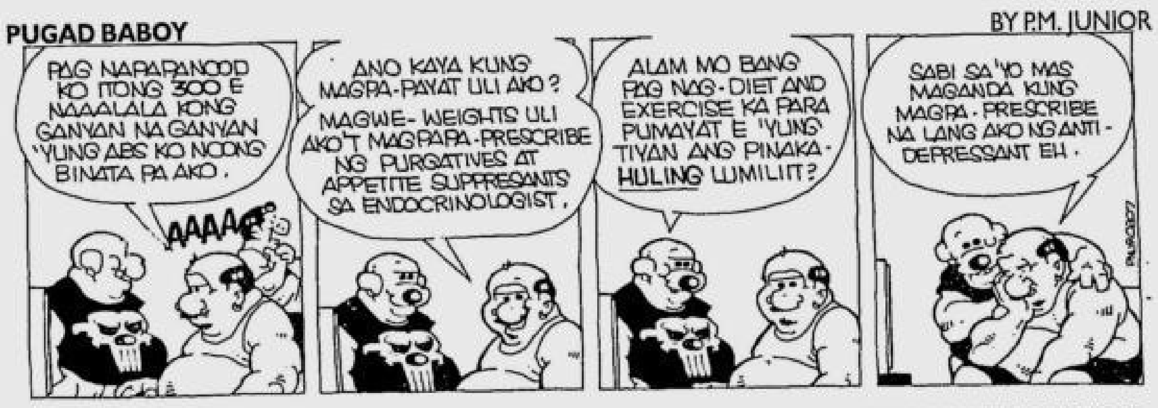
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


KAYA NAMAN NAPANSIN ANG CORRUPTION NA YAN...
DAHIL SA MEDIA! WALA NANG BINALITA KUNDI CORRUPTION!
E... PANG-KARANIWAN NA YAN, E!

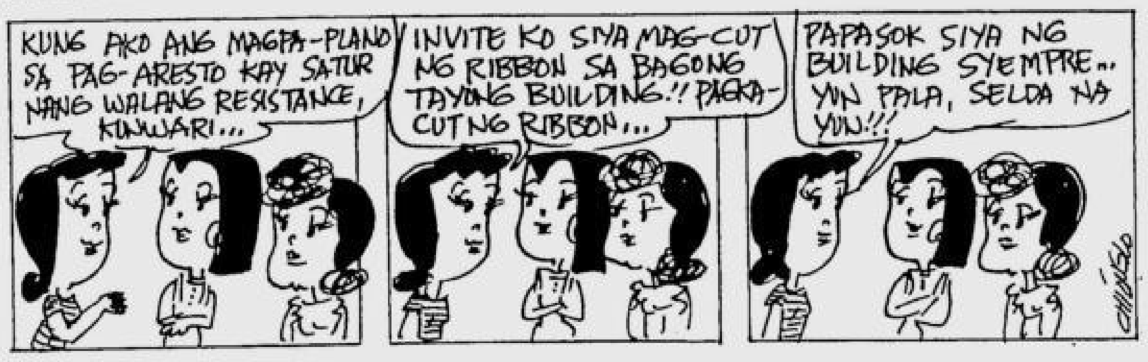
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


PAG NAPAPANOOD KO ITONG 300 E NAAALALA KONG GANYAN NA GANYAN 'YUNG ABS KO NOONG BINATA PA AKO.
AAAAA
ANO KAYA KUNG MAGPA-PAYAT ULI AKO? MAGWE-WEIGHTS ULI AKO'T MAGPAPA-PRESCRIBE NG PURGATIVES AT APPETITE SUPPRESANTS SA ENDOCRINOLOGIST.
ALAM MO BANG PAG NAG-DIET AND EXERCISE KA PARA PUMAYAT E 'YUNG TIYAN ANG PINAKA-HULING LUMILIIT?
SABI SA 'YO MAS MAGANDA KUNG MAGPA-PRESCRIBE NA LANG AKO NG ANTI-DEPRESSANT EH.

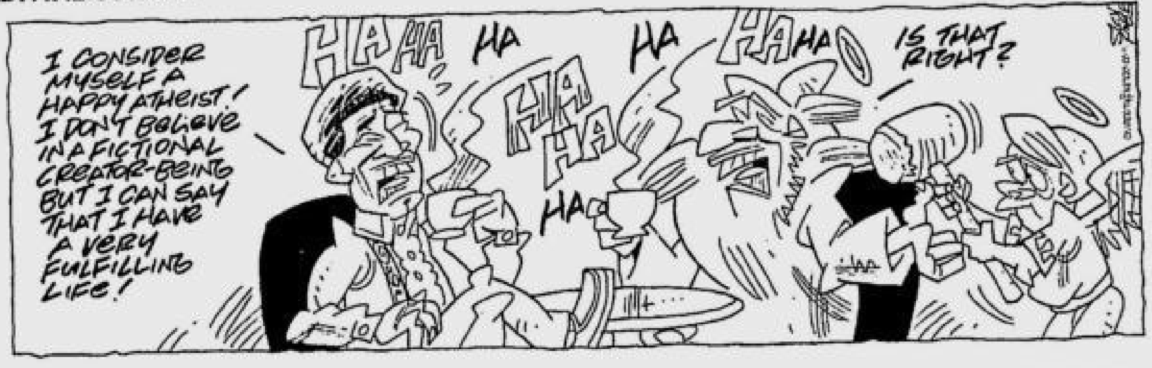
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


KUNG AKO ANG MAGPA-PLANO SA PAG-ARESTO KAY SATUR NANG WALANG RESISTANCE, KUNWARI...
INVITE KO SIYA MAG-CUT NG RIBBON SA BAGONG TAYONG BUILDING.!! PAGKA-CUT NG RIBBON...
PAPASOK SIYA NG BUILDING SYEMPRE.. YUN PALA, SELDA NA YUN!!!
CHIONGLO

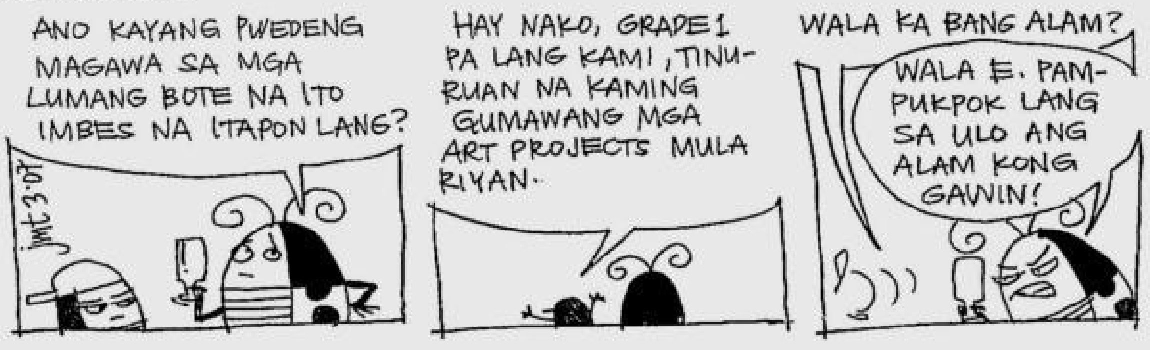
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


I CONSIDER MYSELF A HAPPY ATHEIST! I DON'T BELIEVE IN A FICTIONAL CREATOR-BEING BUT I CAN SAY THAT I HAVE A VERY FULFILLING LIFE!
HAHA HA HA HAHA HA HA HA
IS THAT RIGHT?

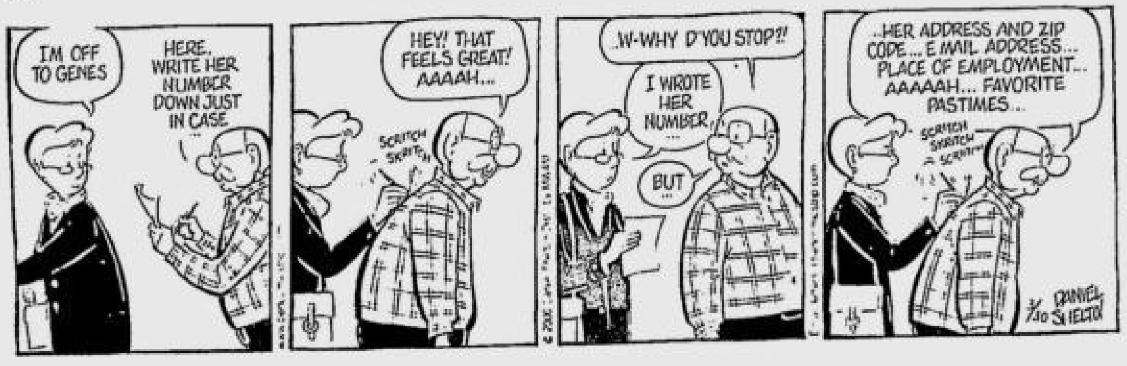
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANO KAYANG PWEDENG MAGAWA SA MGA LUMANG BOTE NA ITO IMBES NA ITAPON LANG?
jmt 3·07
HAY NAKO, GRADE 1 PA LANG KAMI, TINURUAN NA KAMING GUMAWANG MGA ART PROJECTS MULA RIYAN.
WALA KA BANG ALAM?
WALA E. PAMPUKPOK LANG SA ULO ANG ALAM KONG GAWIN!

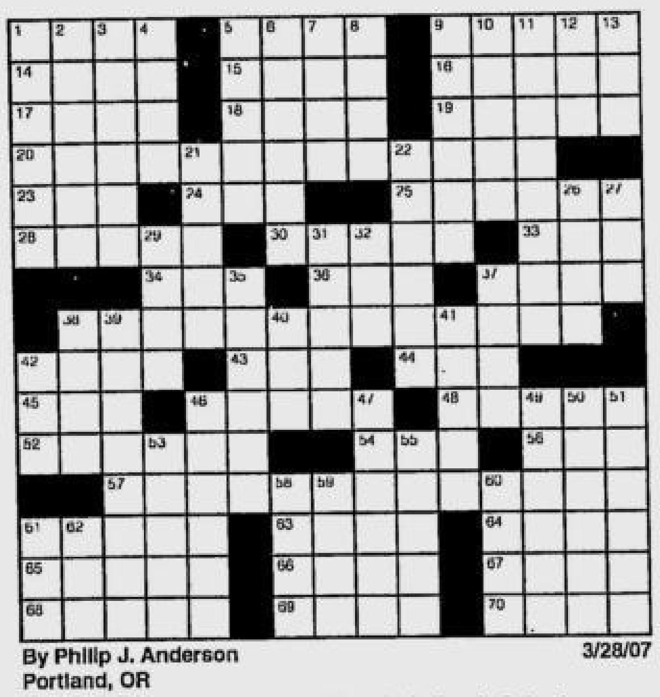
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


I'M OFF TO GENES
HERE. WRITE HER NUMBER DOWN JUST IN CASE ...
HEY! THAT FEELS GREAT! AAAAH...
SCRITCH SKRITCH
..W-WHY D'YOU STOP?!
I WROTE HER NUMBER. ...
BUT ...
..HER ADDRESS AND ZIP CODE... E MAIL ADDRESS... PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT... AAAAAH... FAVORITE PASTIMES...
SCRITCH SKRITCH SCRITCH
DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Bamako's land
5 Literary pieces
9 Old-time street show
14 Turkish titles
15 Caron title role
16 "Maria __"
17 Poet Van Duyn
18 Mingo on "Daniel Boone"
19 Actress Laurie
20 Frontier fire department?
23 Gobbled up
24 Choice abbr.
25 Tropical vines
28 Locations
30 Tribal head
33 Haberdashery purchase
34 French pronoun
36 Period
37 Sassy
38 Frontier justice department?
42 Rowdy bunches
43 Ms. Thurman
44 Mrs. in Mexico
45 NATO cousin
46 Trunk item
48 Watchful
52 Magic word
54 Opposite of masc.
56 __ Lingus (Irish airline)
57 Frontier police department?
61 Defeated rival
63 Swag
64 Lee of Marvel Comics
65 Rhone tributary
66 Positive
67 Kept back
68 Some works of art
69 Comic Johnson
70 God of war



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

3/28/07

DOWN
1 Arboreal snakes
2 Jungle rodent
3 Surgical knife
4 Author Dinesen
5 Fancy marble
6 Agile
7 Ripening agent
8 Yes indeed, Jose
9 Fix
10 Valli of "The Third Man"
11 One making amends
12 Opp. of WSW
13 Corn serving
21 Ruhr industrial center
22 Collects bit by bit
26 Broadcasts
27 Director's milieu
29 Aussie birds
31 "The Merry Widow" composer
32 Joanne of "All the King's Men"
35 Dazed State
37 Thunder sound
38 Wild pig
39 Excessively preoccupied
40 Vocalist Sumac
41 Hobo
42 Janitor's tool
46 Cubic meters
47 Exertion
49 Spring holy day
50 Used deal
51 Tendencies
53 Hite of sex research
55 Lauder of cosmetics
58 "Casablanca" role
59 Bridge group
60 Job safety org.
61 Vietnam Memorial artist
62 Buckeyes' sch.

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

L	P	S	■	E	T	U	D	E	■	W	E	S	T	S
L	O	L	■	F	O	R	U	M	■	A	F	O	O	T
A	P	E	■	F	O	S	B	U	R	Y	F	L	O	P
M	A	I	M	■	T	A	S	■	O	O	O	■	■	■
A	R	G	Y	L	L	■	■	L	O	U	R	D	E	S
■	T	H	R	E	E	P	O	I	N	T	T	U	R	N
■	■	■	R	O	S	E	A	T	E	■	■	E	R	E
S	H	A	H	S	■	E	T	A	■	J	E	S	S	E
P	A	X	■	■	T	R	E	N	T	O	N	■	■	■
A	L	L	E	G	H	E	N	Y	R	I	V	E	R	■
S	T	E	R	O	I	D	■	■	A	N	O	D	E	S
■	■	■	R	E	G	■	P	I	P	■	Y	U	M	A
T	E	X	A	S	H	O	L	D	E	M	■	C	A	R
B	A	L	T	O	■	B	O	O	Z	E	■	E	K	G
A	P	I	A	N	■	I	D	L	E	D	■	S	E	E

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3/28/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: There's a soft innocence about you that endears you to others. You're hardworking, but you're also independent. You're always focused on your own agenda. You value your privacy, and you fight to protect it. You're a good friend to others, and in turn, you have good friends. Work hard this year to build or construct something. Your rewards will soon follow.

Birthdate of: Julia Stiles, actress; Vince Vaughn, actor; Reba McEntire, singer/actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're wondering what it is you should be doing. If you're under 80, you're wondering what you should be when you grow up.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is definitely the time to secure a solid home base for yourself. You need to feel you have a reliable anchor in the world.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You have to go with the flow now. Life is in a state of flux. Job changes and residential moves make everything uncertain.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): It's fitting that at a time when you have opportunities to improve your job, you're giving such serious thought to how you want to earn a living.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You are actually at the beginning of a major 30-year learning cycle. In the next seven years, you're going to reinvent yourself.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Before you bring home a new sofa, you generally have to get rid of the old one. That's where you are right now. Clear the decks to make room for something new.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're often busy trying to please others. Now your challenge is to learn how to embrace others without losing your individuality. (Not always easy for you to do.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You have a lot of responsibilities right. Renovations or changes at home might create chaos and tension. Fortunately, you've got the energy and drive to deal with everything.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a time of preparation. Get your ducks in a row. Study, travel and explore new ideas so that you can achieve the success you want in the next few years.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You've had to get along with less support from partners and other people lately. Give yourself some rewards and time off for good behavior Do a little entertaining!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You need more physical exercise. Perhaps you can join a gym . This is a busy time for you, but family and home entertaining are a source of joy.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're doing a lot behind the scenes right now. However, whatever happens, you have an opportunity to discover just how much love there is in your daily world

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

					5	7	6	
				3				
	9	2	6		7	3	1	
9	3			5			4	1
7								6
4								7
8								3
	4						2	
		3	8	7	9	6		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/28

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

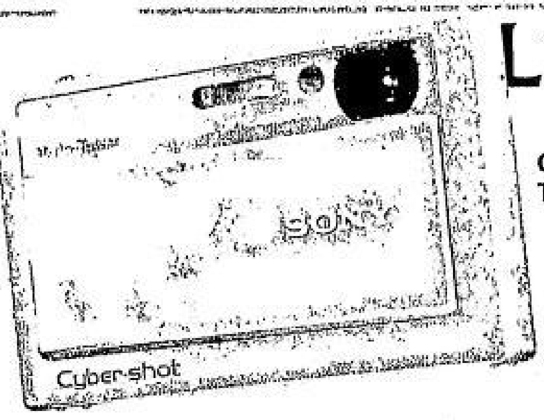
Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	8	9	7	5	6	4	3	1
7	4	1	3	8	9	6	5	2
3	5	6	1	2	4	9	8	7
5	6	3	2	4	1	7	9	8
4	1	7	8	9	3	2	6	5
9	2	8	5	6	7	3	1	4
6	9	2	4	1	8	5	7	3
8	7	5	6	3	2	1	4	9
1	3	4	9	7	5	8	2	6

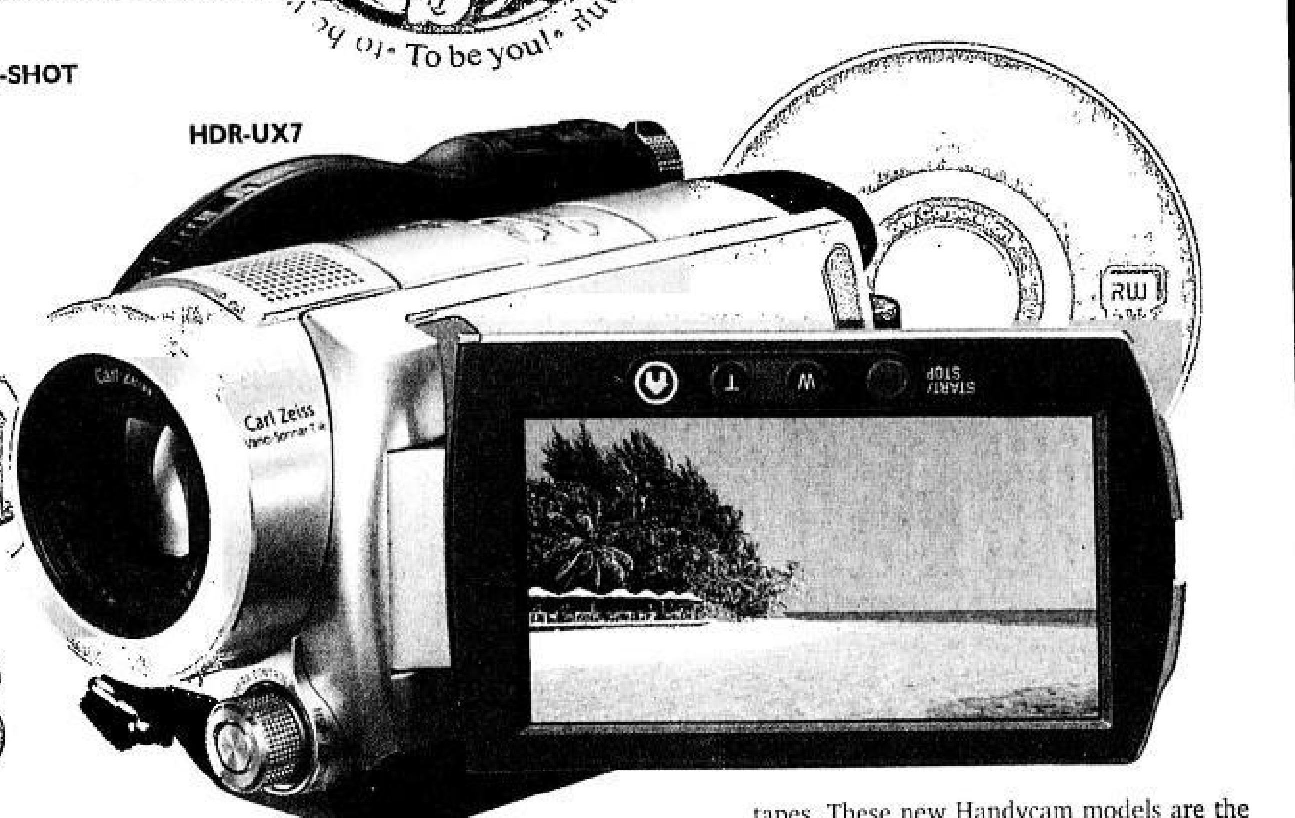
Difficulty Level ★★

Sony has some compelling new offerings lined up



CYBER-SHOT T20

Hooray for high-definition cams



HDR-UX7

By Gabriel H. Mercado
2bU! Contributor

IT'S THE END OF THE 1ST QUARTER of 2007, just about that time of the month when all the major manufacturers release their latest gadgets onto our unsuspecting wallets.

This year, Sony's got some of the most compelling offerings lined up, using HD (High Definition) as its mantra. So let's check out what the brand has in store for us.

Cyber-shot T, W and H-Series

Of the Cyber-shot lineup, the T-Series represents point-and-shoot models in small sizes that easily fit pockets or bags, brushed aluminum surfaces, handy sliding covers, and a choice of colors to choose from. A noticeable feature of the T-Series is the lack of retracting lens.

There are red and black variants for the top-of-the-line model T-100, and white, black, and pink for the T-20, both of which are the only T-Series available in the Philippines.

The T-100 (P32,999) boasts 8.1 megapixels, 5x optical zoom, 8.5 high definition Smart Zoom, a 3.0" clear Photo LCD screen, High Sensitivity ISO 3200, full HD TV resolution mode at 1920 x 1080, HD Slideshow with music functions, face-detection technology and in-camera retouching.

The cheaper T-20 (P28,999) also has these features, but has a smaller 2.5 LCD and 3x optical zoom.

Both sport the latest Sony advancements, namely the BIONZ imaging processor and the 1920 x 1080 output that make them compatible with full High Definition TV. They also come with ISO3200 high sensitivity mode, Super Steady Shot, in-camera editing and retouching features. Plus, of course, the famous Carl Zeiss Vario Tessar Lens that Sony Cyber-shots are known for.

The W-Series is the more affordable mid-range point-and-shoot, with a high emphasis on ease of use. This year, we see the entry of the W90 (P29,999.99) and the W80 (P24,999). The W90 boasts 8.1 megapixels, with ISO3200 sensitivity and SteadyShot technology combined for the Double Anti Blur Solution. Again, HD ability features HD output, HD slideshow with music, a 2.5 LCD screen and a plethora of other features.

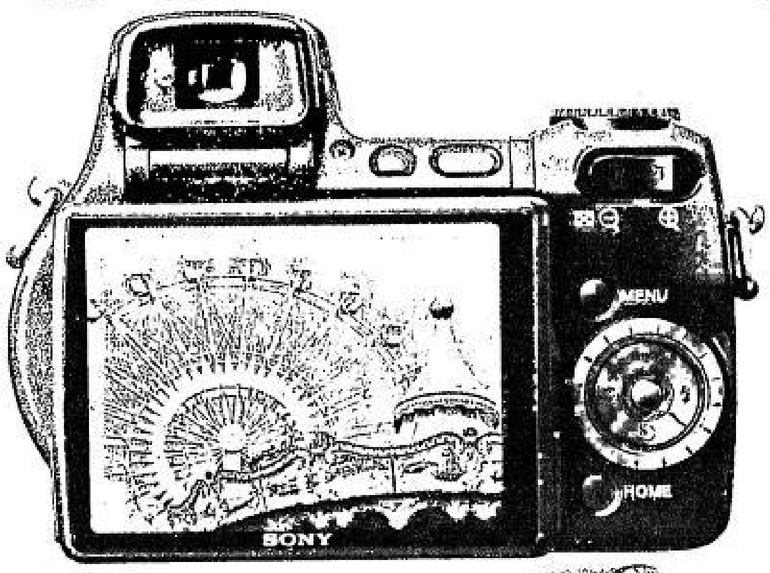
The W80 comes with almost the same size, weight and features, but at 7.2 megapixels. The two models are available in silver, black, white or pink. Other shared features are the Carl Zeiss lens, in-camera retouching and red eye reduction, and the ability to take up to 340 shots via a powerful lithium ion battery.

Finally, the H-Series represents Sony's "pro to semi-pro" solution, for those with the highest requirements in digital photography.

The H-Series usually come in a black or silver finish, with up to 15x optical zoom, ISO3200 for extreme low-light shooting, and in the shape, size and approximate weight of 'traditional' cameras.

The two new models are the H9 (P37,999.99) and the H7 (P33,999). Both sport 8.1 megapixels, with the H9 having the advantage of a 3.0" tilt-up screen that allows for low-angle shooting and on-screen instructions, and a 'NightShot' Infrared System that lets you shoot in near or total darkness without a flash.

The H7 has a smaller 2.5" LCD screen, but shares almost the same features with the H9, including an Advanced Sports mode that lets you shoot at high shutter speeds for those action shots, a long-distance powerful flash, Super SteadyShot, HD output, 9 Point Auto Focus, in-camera retouching, a remote control function and long battery life.



CYBER-SHOT H9 (above) and CYBER-SHOT H7

New technologies

BIONZ isn't a new technology that will make you magically look like a fabulous hiphop star. Rather, it's a processing engine that optimizes images, allowing for more vibrant detail clarity via a D-Range optimizer and Zone Matching. It was first implemented in the high-end Sony DLSR Alpha range.

HD Smart Zoom is the ability to view images at a high 16:9 aspect ratios for HDTV screens, basically by cropping photos taken at the maximum image sizes rather than enlarging smaller ones.

Finally, another new technology is Full HD Slide Show with music, which basically lets you attach your Cyber-shot to a high-definition TV and watch your images slide by accompanied by music that's either preset or of your own choosing.

HD camcorders

There are four new camcorders from Sony, all sporting high-definition capability: the HDR-HC5 (P84,999), HDR-HC7 (P94,999), HDR-UX5 (P74,999) and HDR-UX7 (P84,999).

The HDR UX7 and UX5 record video on 8-cm DVD discs, while the HDR-HC7 and HC5 are HDV models saving their data on MiniDV tapes. These new Handycam models are the first camcorders compliant with "x.v.Colour," the international standard for wide color space within moving images endorsed by the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

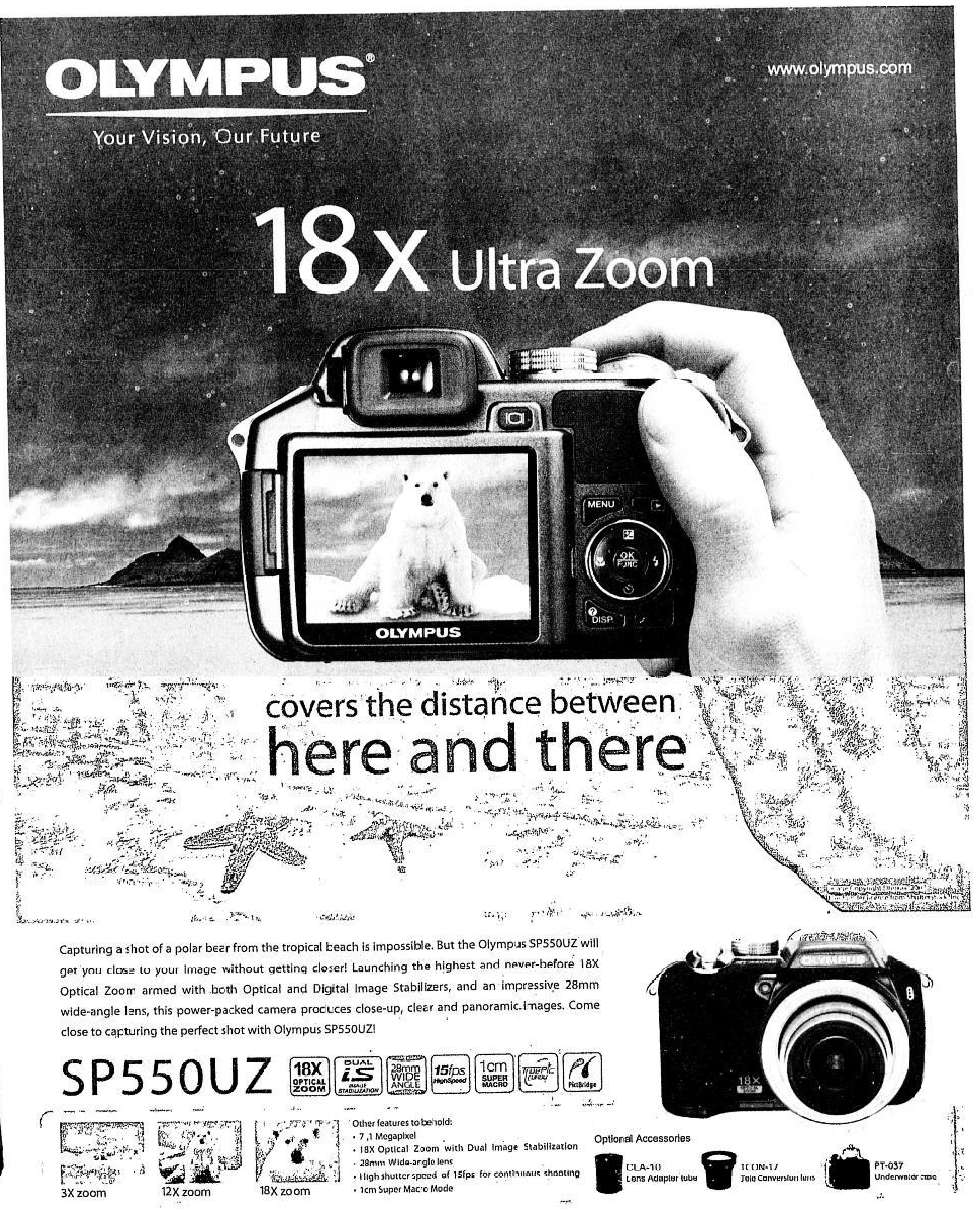
The x.v.Colour is a color range that's approximately twice that of conventional standards, which gives consumers more colorful images when recording and viewing home videos.

The UX5 and HC5 can shoot still photos of up to 4 megapixels while the higher end UX7 and HC7 can take 6.1-megapixel shots. An advantage of the new Handycam models is the dual recording function that lets users take high-resolution still images even while recording. Images taken during dual recording with the UX7 and HC7 can be set up to 4.6 megapixels, and 2.3 megapixels for the UX5 and HC5.

The four new models also incorporate useful features such as the Super SteadyShot optical image stabilization that efficiently reduces blur and allows stable shooting for both video and still images.

The UX7 sports a larger (3.5") LCD screen, while the other three models have smaller (2.7") LCD screens.

CYBER-SHOT T100



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18X Ultra Zoom

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SP550UZ

18X OPTICAL ZOOM · DUAL IS IMAGE STABILIZATION · 28mm WIDE ANGLE · 15fps HighSpeed · 1cm SUPER MACRO · TruePic TURBO · PictBridge

3X zoom
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18X zoom

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PT-037 Underwater case

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Speed comparisons in default and fastest modes [illegible] available as of April 2006. For more information [illegible] selected models. ©2007 Hewlett-Packard Development Company [illegible]

JORDIN Sparks

CHRIS Sligh

Idolizing 'Idol'

IT WAS A NIGHT OF '60'S BRITISH HITS last week as the Top 11 duked it out on Star World's "American Idol." We had to bid 19-year-old Stephanie Edwards goodbye.come Thursday, as America decided she didn't have what it takes. Our 2bU! readers seem to agree, as they singled out Melinda Doolittle and Jordin Sparks as the best last week.

Cathy, Kim and Bryan all get special premium prizes from Star World and "American Idol." To claim your prize, contact Cindy Corrales at Stratworks, 8937473-73.

You, too, can win exciting prizes from the world's biggest singing competition! Catch "American Idol" live tonight at 6 p.m. (or primetime at 8 p.m. and encore at 11:30 p.m.) on Star World, tell us your name and contact details, comment on the finalists' performance, styling, song choice, audience impact, and even fashion in five sentences or less and e-mail to starworld.ph@gmail.com.

Here's what our three winners had to say about last week's episode:

From Cathy Barcelon (cathee_17@yahoo.com): "Melinda Doolittle made sure last night that "American Idol" does need her. She shone once again, proving that she's in a different league compared to the rest. Jordin Sparks also proved she deserves a slot in the finals with her tremendous talent and potential. Performers who made boo-boos the week before made a comeback: Haley Scarnato, Chris Sligh, Blake Lewis, and Chris Richardson. But there were lackluster performances from Gina Glocksen, Stephanie Edwards, Phil Stacey, and Lakisha Jones. As for 17-year-old Sanjaya Malakar, I say, 'Give it a rest, boy!' He still lacks the power to hoard audiences."

From Kim Huang (icy_flame21@yahoo.com): "Jordin was definitely the star of the night. She went against all odds and succeeded. She rocked it, and the way she built up to the peak of the song was fantastic: from soft and sultry to powerful. It really showed her range. She truly deserves to win. Chris Richardson, who deviated from his usual element, was also excellent. It was amazing to see what he could do, really. On the other hand, Sanjaya was a nightmare. I give him credit for trying something new, but his performance was way below par."

From Bryan Pineda (his.majesty81@gmail.com): "I loved the show this week because the finalists gave really good performances. Haley, with her nice long legs and that dress, was sizzling hot, while Chris delivered a totally cool and laid-back acoustic performance. Blake's got the rhythm and the moves, but Stephanie wasn't as impressive as she was in previous weeks. Lakisha didn't shine enough for me. Jordin looked beautiful, but I didn't feel a connection because, although her vocals were fantastic, her performance was more on style and hitting the notes than on emotion. Phil and Gina rocked the house, and Chris Sligh was fun to watch. Melinda? Without a doubt, hers was the best vocal of the night."

PHIL Stacey

CHRIS Richardson

GINA Glocksen

BLAKE Lewis

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ALJUR ABRENICA
JEWEL MISCHE
MART Escudero and Kris Bernal

INSIDE

Four young 'stars' are born via GMA 7's reality talent search, 'Starstruck the Next Level,' concluded last Sunday. Find out what prizes they won. /G2

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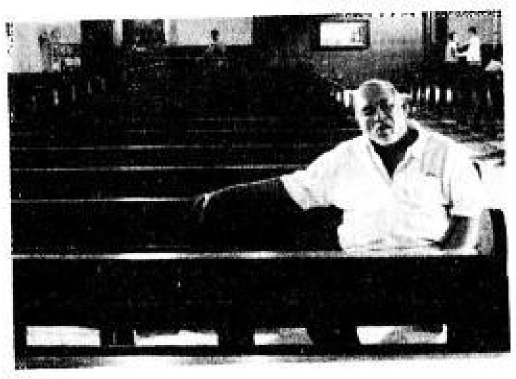


Ang Huling Araw ng Linggo

Stars Johnny Delgado, Boots Anson-Roa, Jennifer Sevilla, Baron Geisler, Angeli Bayani

Directed by Nick Joseph Olanka

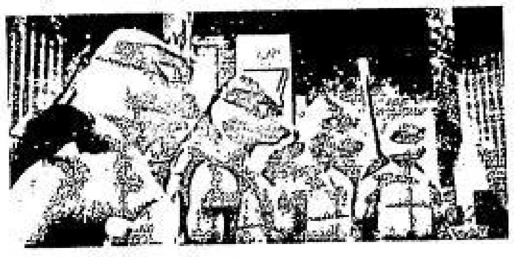
An entry in last year's Cinemalaya digital film fest, this drama traces the interconnections between seven characters. Nestor U. Torre of the INQUIRER says the script shows "life as a cycle of 'random' events in which decisions made are as important as choices not taken." Bikoy.net explains that "the film doesn't follow the traditional three-act structure … it was sort of agonizing in a satisfying kind of way … It's a profound film which tries to remind us that everything we do or don't affect other people." Exclusively in SM Digital Cinemas.

Duda/Bathhouse

Stars Andoy Ranay, Rey Pumaloy, Paolo Gabriel/Jett Alcantara, Ray-an Dulay, John Lapus

Directed by Cris Pablo

Having a back-to-back, week-long run at the Robinsons Galleria's IndieSine are Cris Pablo's "Duda/Doubt" and "Bathhouse." In "Duda," a gay man, who boasts 4,001 sexual conquests, is defeated by his suspicions that his partner isn't faithful. Mark Deming of New York Times says that this digital feature was shown at the Big Apple's 2004 Asian-American Film Festival. Scott Cranin of TLAVideo.com calls it "surprisingly calm … and acted with unusual subtlety." "Bathhouse" is described by CD Universe as a "steamy thriller [about] a mismatched couple that hooks up one heady night." Cranin of TLAVideo comments that "it tells its story with sensuality, romance and compelling storytelling skills."



TMNT

With the voices of James Arnold Taylor, Mikey Kelley, Patrick Stewart, Sara Michelle Gellar, Ziyi Zhang

Directed by Kevin Munroe

A ruthless general opens a mythical portal and unleashes 13 monsters into the world. Can New York's mutated-turtle heroes get their act together to vanquish their evil enemy? Misha Davenport of Chicago Sun-Times opines that this "beautiful-looking computer animated film employs a grittier and darker palette" compared to its three live-action predecessors in the 1990s. Angel Cohn of TV Guide complains: "Bummer, dudes … [this flick] suffers from serious animation overkill … this go-for-broke overhaul has stripped away its entertaining charm."

Rocky Balboa

Stars Sylvester Stallone, Burt Young, Milo Ventimiglia, Geraldine Hughes, AJ Benza

Directed by Sylvester Stallone

Fifty-something Rocky, the widowed owner of an Italian restaurant, goes back to the ring to slug it out with a heavyweight champ. Stephen Holden of New York Times points out: "Surprisingly, [it] is no embarrassment. Like its forerunners, it goes the distance almost in spite of itself." Ethan Alter of Premiere magazine asserts: "The sixth installment of the franchise … is a film that's as much as a nostalgia trip for the audience as it is for its star." Owen Gleiberman of Entertainment Weekly proffers: "It turns out that the added years only benefit the character, making him seem touchingly new because he's so old."

Happily N'Ever After

With the voices of Sigourney Weaver, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Freddie Prinze Jr., Andy Dick

OPENING/ G4

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SONY

Cyber-shot

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HD Slideshow function enables you to view your pictures in High Definition TV image quality complete with your favorite music.

*Optional HD output adapter cable required. Only the still picture correspond to the high definition output.

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HD Smart Zoom magnification ratio depending on Cyber-shot model

16:9 aspect ratio HD TV screen

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Cyber-shot Station for TV & HD Output Cable*

CSS-HD1
- For High Definition/Standard quality image output with remote control and camera charging function
- For DSC-T100/T20/W90/W80

VMC-MHC1
- For HD quality image output
- For DSC-T100/T20/W90/W80/H9/H7

DSC-T100
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- 1920 x 1080 Resolution Compatible with Full HD TV
- Face Detection Technology
- Fun In-Camera Retouching

DSC-W90
- Effective 8.1 Mega Pixel
- BIONZ Imaging Processor
- Optical Image Stabilizer & ISO 3200 High Sensitivity
- 1920 x 1080 Resolution Compatible with Full HD TV
- Face Detection Technology
- Fun In-Camera Retouching

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4 new 'stars' are born via GMA 7 talent search

By Nini Valera

FOUR NEW "STARS" were born Sunday night at the Marikina Sports Park on final judgment day for "Starstruck The Next Level," a GMA 7 reality talent search.

Mart Escudero of Cavite and Kris Bernal of Quezon City were named Ultimate Love Team, Aljur Abrenica of Pampanga grabbed the Ultimate Hunk title, and Jewel Mische of Bulacan received the crown as Ultimate Sweetheart.

The quartet received the biggest number of text and on-line votes from viewers, edging out the more talented Rich Asuncion of Bohol and Prince Stefan of Iloilo.

Big prizes

The winners each got P1 million in cash and a P2-million talent build-up contract from the network, a franchise from Belgian Waffle Express, a two-year scholarship from Informatics, and P220,000 in cash and gifts from Calayan Surgicenter.

Escudero, 18, a high school student at the St. Jude's Academy in Cavite, made the cut after he was brought back in the competition during a wild card episode (he and Asuncion had earlier been eliminated).

"I am so thankful [for winning]," Escudero told INQUIRER Entertainment in Filipino. "I never expected this, especially after I was already eliminated. But I will take care of this (chance at stardom), and will not let it slip out of my grasp."

Donation

He plans to give part of his cash prize to the Philippine General Hospital.

Escudero's mother, Suyen, seated in the third row among the audience, Mart's baby brother on her lap, said she was "very happy" that her son had won.

Bernal, 17, a nursing student at the Trinity University, said winning made up for the all the acting, singing and dancing challenges—she had to hurdle for 12 weeks. Earlier paired with Abrenica for Ultimate Love Team, Bernal said she did not mind the switch in partners, even if she admitted that she felt more comfortable with the boy from Pampanga. "[But] Mart and I are also close friends," she said.

Beginning

Abrenica was satisfied with the outcome, saying, "This is just the beginning for me."

The Starstruck council—composed of actress Lorna Tolentino, talent manager Douglas Quijano, and multi media director Louie Ignacio, were joined by Wilma Galvante, GMA 7's senior vice president for entertainment, and Annette Gozon, president of GMA Films—decided on the pairing of the Ul-

FOUR/ G4

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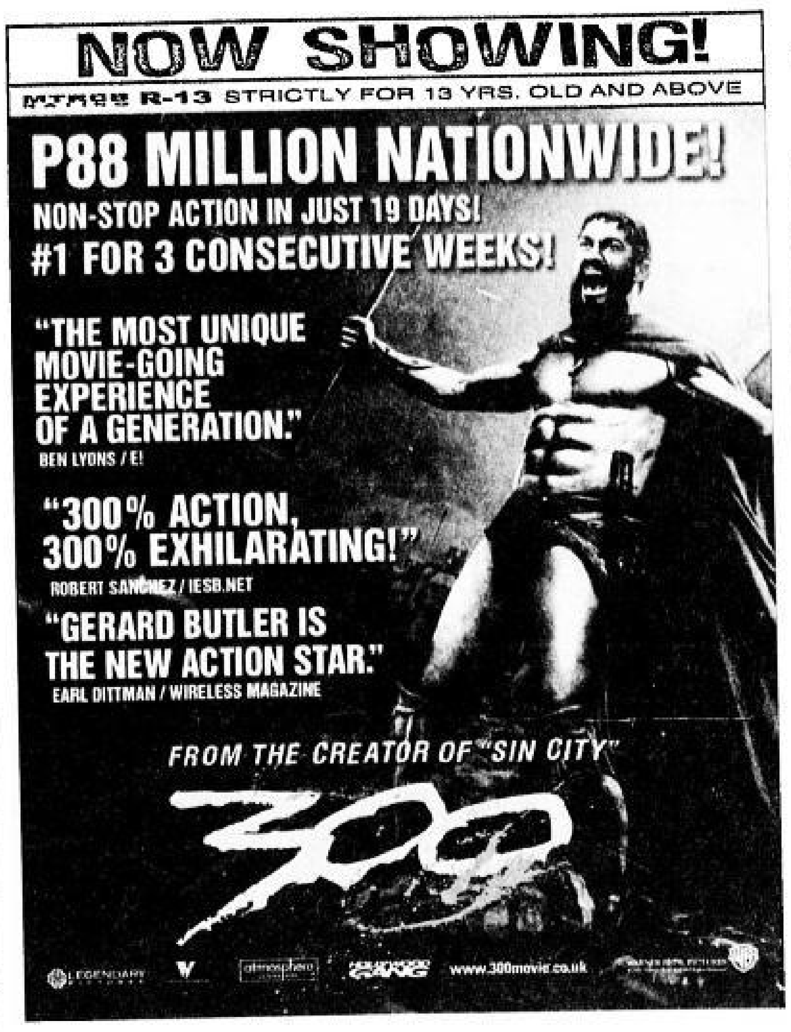

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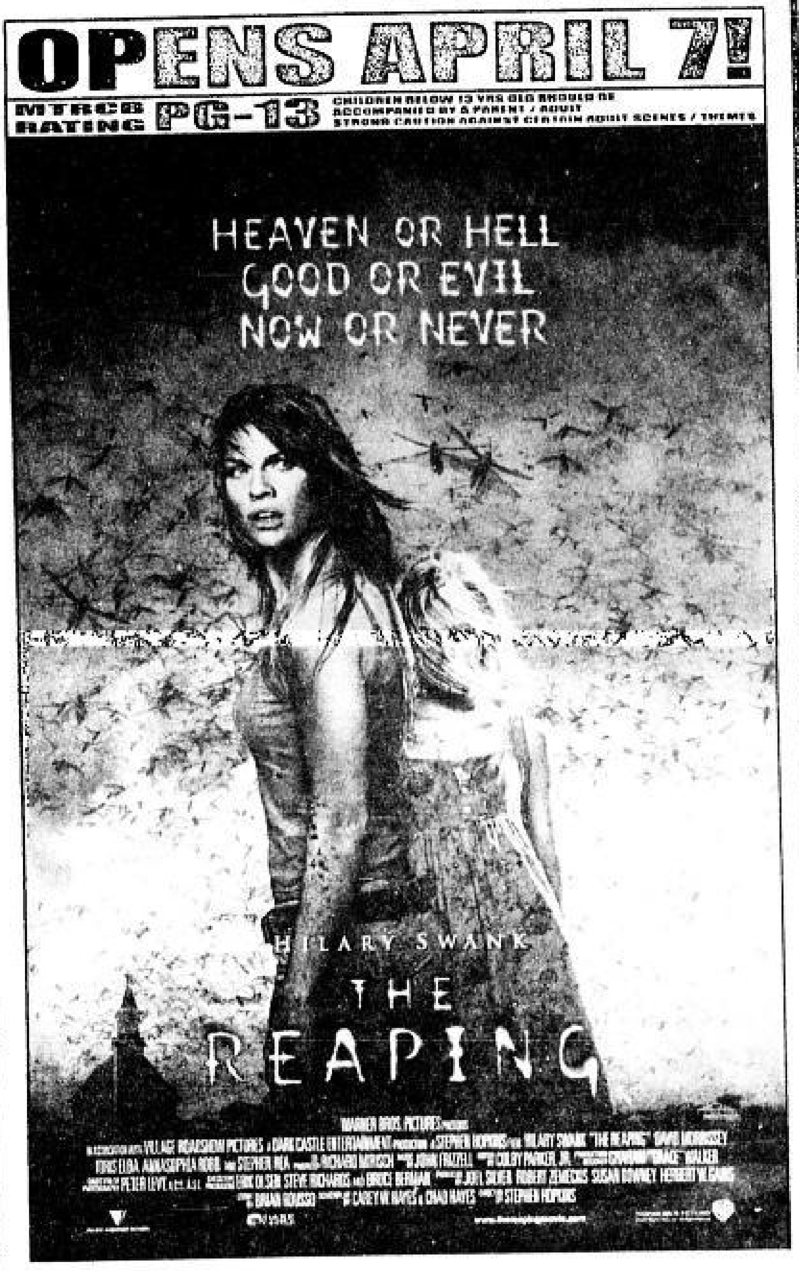

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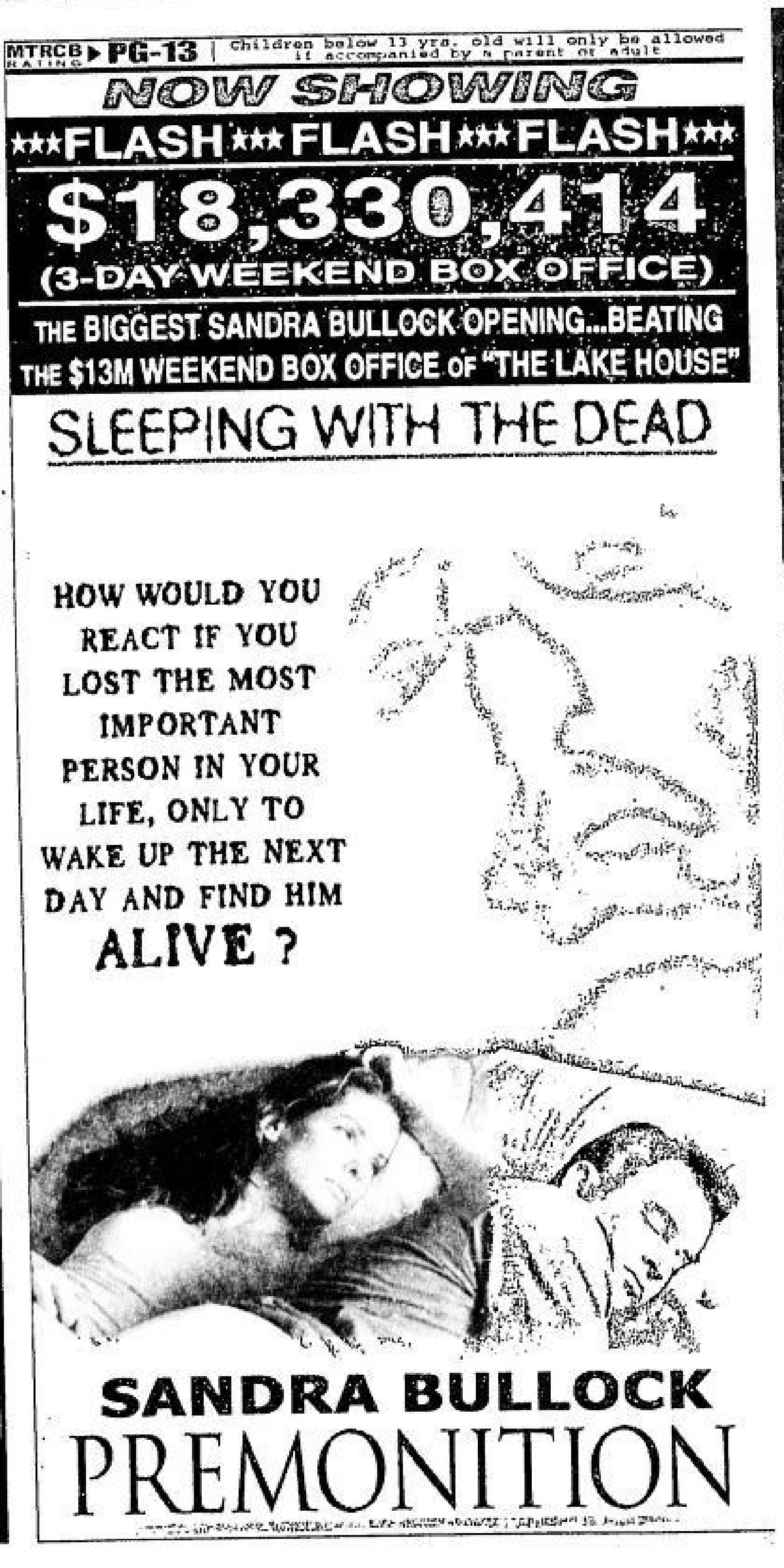

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"I'M GOING to miss everybody."

Stephanie: I was . . .

From page G6

ing (sic)."

After singing Dusty Springfield's "You Don't Have To Say You Love Me" for last week's British pop theme, Paula Abdul told her she should have "more fun" onstage.

Simon Cowell affirmed Paula's comment, saying Stephanie's performance "lacked the edginess and youthful energy that she brought to her previous performances."

It was judge Randy Jackson's advice that Stephanie found most encouraging.

"[Randy] told me to just make sure I find Stephanie amongst everything."

In a scale of one to 10, how shocked were you with this week's decision?

Probably about a five, just because of my performance last Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila). I had a feeling I was going to land in the bottom, because of what the judges said. And I was right.

If you had to do it all over again, would you have done anything differently this week?

I would have definitely chosen a faster song.

Who are you going to miss the most from the other contestants?

I'm going to miss everybody.

The "Idol Live Tour" takes only the top 10. Was the pressure greater this week because of that?

Yes, it was definitely added pressure. Also, people were more focused this week, I think.

How do you feel about missing the tour then?

It's a bummer. I kind of try to look at the bright side and think maybe one day I'll go on tour, even if it's not with "American Idol." [Or] I can just put out my own record, you know.

What would you have wanted people to know about you?

That I'm not as mature as they think I am.

Do you think the constant comparisons to Beyonce and Fantasia worked against you?

I don't think so.

What do you think it was that didn't connect with the fans and voters?

The song, I think.

Watch "American Idol" on Star World every Wednesday and Thursday 6 p.m. live via satellite, 8 p.m. prime time, and 11:30 p.m.

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ALIMALL 5

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Yeng Constantino: With Globe Kantabataan anything is possible

By Menchie Osial

Globe kantabataan
07
YOUTH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Winning singer-songwriter leads youth empowerment through music

Eighteen year old Yeng Constantino stands for what she believes in. It is no wonder that she survived all the tests thrown her way in the Pinoy Dream Academy competition and came out on top. That's just who she is and that's why she was the perfect fit to endorse Globe Kantabataan Youth Music Festival. Globe Telecom believes in the talents of the Filipino teen, such as Yeng, so much that last year they launched the first countrywide Kantabataan— a song-writing contest for bands of three to five members. The entries to the contest were original compositions with the theme "Saya ng Buhay Estudyante" which spoke about the life of students but which embodied themes that reinforced positive values among the participants.

"*Huwag ka nang mamroblema / Huwag ka nang magisip pa / Huwag ka nang manibago / Pakinggan mo ako / Posible kabataan / Posible ang madadaanan / Posible kahit saan / Posible ang kinabukasan,*" sang Yeng when she was tasked to come up with her own composition, on the spot, using the key word "posible" that each song entry to the Globe Kantabataan requires. "Lakas" is another key word required for the entries. The compositions should revolve around the theme, "Isang Tinig ng Kabataan para sa *ayt* na kinabukasan."

Yeng embodies the idealism, enthusiasm and spunk that all young Filipinos in her age group experience. She knows that each one of today's youth has something to say and that music is one great way to express this message. Globe has given Yeng an opportunity to speak for her peers and to see that there is hope in their future.

Yeng is still overwhelmed over being chosen by Globe as an ambassador for Kantabataan. She likens it to a dream come true, perhaps one, that if it were really a dream, she would prefer never to wake from. She is also aware of the responsibility that comes with representing the young. She knows that there are many people who look up to her and she does not want to disappoint them. "It is really different, being chosen by Globe. Hanggang ngayon. I am surprised that I was given the honor. Especially when I see myself in the print ads, it still astonishes me," she quips. "Mas nakakagulat pa kasi may tagline sa ilalim ng photo ko na Globe Kantabataan."

Through Globe Kantabataan, Yeng sees the opportunity for her to influence the youth. And then, as she weighs the resp the young girl in her smiles and says, "Iba rin ang saya. It is an honor to be chosen by a company like Globe, to a inspiration to young people." Yeng says that when her friends talk about Globe they say that it is hip to use Globe " w ako," says Yeng. "Wow endorser ako ng Globe. Iba talaga." The wow factor of being with Globe hit Yeng when she did the radio ads for Kantabataan. It was during the taping that it dawned on her that what Globe Kantabataan was asking her to do was to call on young people to compose music that best represents them. "Kailangan original tayo. Mabuhay ang musikang pinoy."

Youth themes: self-expression, positivism, growing up

It is really great for Yeng, who at 18, is leading a campaign for Globe that cries out, "Ito musika natin, ipaglaban natin." There is room for everyone and anyone who has something to sing about. This is Yeng's take on the music industry. Any artist, whether they are part of a band or not, needs to recognize that they have talent. It is important that they share this message with whoever is willing to listen. "Since it is not just a contest but a music festival, joining Kantabataan will help young bands believe in themselves and be proud not only of being Pinoy but also of being who they are," she adds.

Yeng knows whereof she speaks. She experienced the same thing when she was in Pinoy Dream Academy. She had something to share, and she wanted to reach as many people as she could with her message. "I wanted to release who I am. Malaking fulfillment 'yon. It is good that we are able to release what we feel, who we are. And to be able to do it through music makes it all the better," she says. Yeng waxes philosophical when she talks about the problems of the young today. Like most kids her age, Yeng says that most of their problems concern parents who don't understand what they are going through in life. She points out that even her own choice of alternative rock might have been a result of her own conflicts with her parents when she was younger. "Kasi pag bata ka akala mo alam mo na ang lahat. Parang gusto naming sabihin sa mga parents namin na huwag na silang makialam. Alam na namin kung ano ang ginagawa namin," shares Yeng, who has passed through that stage. She says that most kids experience that stage where they feel the world is against them, they are misunderstood. "I am what I am today because I passed that stage," she avers.

Other concerns are love life, studies and peer pressure. Yeng says that these are likely to be some of the themes that the songs that Kantabataan will generate. But she adds that what is great about Kantabataan is that it fosters a positive appreciation for life.

> "Walang titigil. Lahat posible."

When it comes to writing songs, Yeng points to her ka-tropa as the people who have been most influential. They have been there for her. And since they are about the same age, they understand each other's gripes about life. "I get ideas from what my friends talk about."
She says. "I try to convey what my friends are feeling through my songs."

Yeng's inspiration

Friends are not her only influence. Her highly popular song "Hawak Kamay" was written for a family member, her closest cousin. Yeng says that when her cousin left there was a void in her life that she found difficult [illegible] she turned to song writing and this helped her cope with the difficulty of feeling so alone.

But what is most important to Yeng is that when one speaks through music one's sincerity has to be felt. If a song is written from the heart, people who hear it will be touched. Yeng says that if you write a song and are too busy analyzing the words you may lose the deep-felt emotions that go with the song. "Mas maganda kung galing sa 'puso," she says. "My experience has been that if a song is written from the heart, other people will feel what you are singing and then they can relate to you."

As a musician, Yeng goes for alternative music. "Gusto ko yung may suntok talaga," she shares. "Mahilig talaga ako sa ganung tugtog. Kahit love songs basta alternative music." Yeng loves Alanis Morisette. But in the local scene she likes female vocalists like Barbie Almalbis, Kitchie Nadal and Session Road.

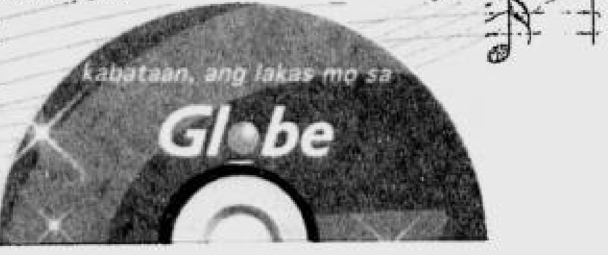
Inspiration for song writing may hit Yeng at any time of the day. This is why she stays attuned to herself all the time. "My inspirations come to me like butterflies. I have to make sure that I am attentive when these ideas and inspirations come so that I can catch them," she says. "I also hear melodies in my head which I immediately add words to." At the end of the day, Yeng knows that Pinoy Dream Academy had given her the boost she needed. She knows that people began to sit and listen to her when they saw her talent shine through. "I believe that when I write a song it is really puso-sa-puso," she says. "When I write a song and you listen to it you will also feel what I feel. And then you will be able to relate to the song as your own experience." That is the mark that Yeng wants people to know her by. She is someone who is true to herself and is willing to go the distance for what she believes in.

Advice to amateur youth bands

Yeng, who is just beginning her career as a songwriter and singer, has a lot of advice for young people out there who want to join Globe Kantabataan "Once you know what kind of music you love to do, panindigan mo until the end. Huwag mong bibitawan. Kung nasaan ang puso mo, doon ka," she adds. "Hindi mo kailangan gawin ang isang bagay kasi gusto mo maging sikat. It is most important to stand for what you believe in especially when it comes to the music that you perform." Yeng continues to pursue her dreams. This is the same wish she has for the bands that will join Kantabataan. "Just keep pursuing your dreams. Every one of us will have our own time to shine."

Yeng says that people who don't fight till the end are the real losers. "Globe Kantabataan offers an opportunity for people like us to sing out our hopes and dreams. It would be great to be heard," says Yeng. "Walang titigil. Lahat posible."

Interested amateur youth bands are encouraged to visit www.kantabataan.com.ph for the full mechanics of Globe's nationwide songwriting competition. For an overview, just text KANTA to 2346 for free.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Samantha (Julia Estelle) has had it enough living with her step-father who takes advantage of and molests her since her mother passed away. She decides to move to a boarding house. She ignores the fact that the location is in a haunted neighborhood. Her boyfriend Evan (Evan Sanders) tries to warn her, but since their relationship is hanging on a thread, Sam doesn't really listen to his warnings. Once arrived, the keeper of the house sings an ancient Javanese chant that somehow taps into Sam's nerve. The ancient chant is connected to an Indonesian she-demon, The Kuntilanak. A confrontation with one of the female tenants causes Sam to unvoluntarily chant the spell. As a result, the girl dies in a tragic death. The next thing she knows, whomever she sings the chant to will die a horrible death. Things turn out of control, and Evan tries to get Sam out of the house. Yet, the unstable Sam misunderstands Evan and ends up singing the chant to him. Evan then mysteriously disappears. Sam learns that there's a power bestowed to her, and she is eager to find Evan before that evil power takes total control of her.

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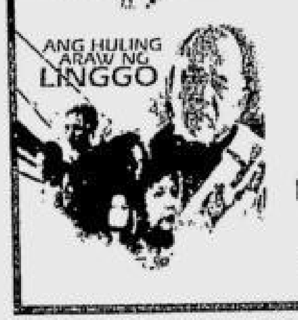
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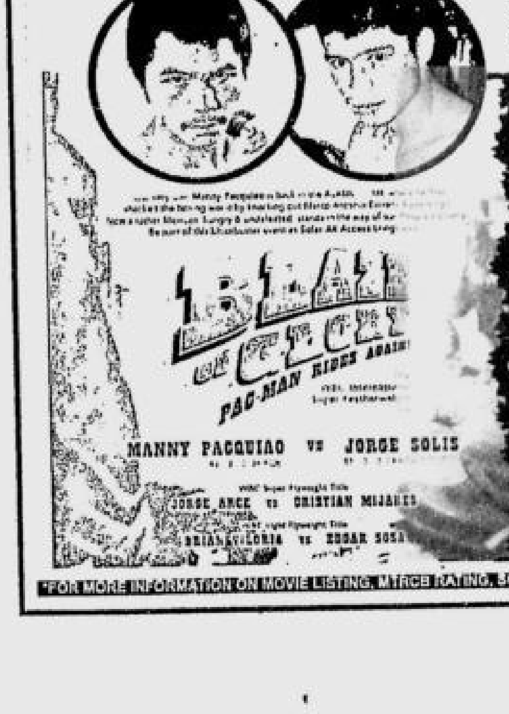
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OPENING TODAY

From page G1

Directed by Paul J. Bolger and Yvette Kaplan

What would happen if Cinderella's cruel stepmother Frieda (Weaver) teams up with other baddies, stages a coup and takes over fairy tales. Cinderella (Gellar) must then join a resistance group composed of damsels in distress, sans their Princes Charming. Tom Keogh of Seattle Times states that this "brash comedy … is spare on emotional development but generous with smart-aleck schtick." Ann Hornaday of Washington Post gasps: "Lacking the genuine wit and humanism of ['Shrek'], this one deserves its dumpin'."

The Groomsmen

Stars Edward Burns, Donal Logue, Jay Mohr, John Leguizamo, John Russo

Directed by Edward Burns

OPENING/ G6

Four new …

From page G2

timate Love Team.

"We chose the two who looked good together," Galvante told INQUIRER Entertainment.

'Blessing'

Mische, 17, a Music major at the University of the Philippines, said her victory was a "blessing," especially since the other contestants had repeatedly voted her off. Her prize money would go to investments, she said.

Abrenica and Bernal, also named texters' choice, are also getting a modeling and endorsement contract from BNY Jeans. Mische also won the Dutchmill Yoghurt Drink Cook Survivor Award and received a talent contract to endorse the brand.

Dancing queen

Ibang Level (special) Awards were handed to some of the avengers. For her energetic moves on "Itaktak Mo," one of the recurring dance themes in the contest, Jesi Corcuera became the "Taktak Itaktak" awardee. Most Dramatic Exit Awards for tearful farewells went to Dez Quindoza and Stef Prescott. Jan Manual, who became popular for his imitation of Manny Pacquiao, received the "Dats Entertaining Award."

Stefan and Asuncion were given management contracts by GMA 7.

Long wait

Final judgment also took its toll on the audience, who sat through more than four hours of the program, highlighted by the performances of the current contenders, as well as winners of the previous batches. Regine Velasquez sang towards the end, joking that she would be bringing the rain, following scattered showers.

Fortunately, the rain did not come. It was clearly a night for the winners, who shone brighter than the stars.

Attitude? ...

From page G6

outs, and could potentially make it anywhere.

Trouble is, a number of the finalists possess distinctly underwhelming modeling qualities, resulting in a disparity that makes the viewer wonder why they got into the finals in the first place.

Quite expectedly, these weak candidates get the brunt of the show's resident mentors' catty remarks, and that strikes us as rather unfair. If they're so inept, why even consider them as finalists?

Some mentors also lack specificity in the "training" they provide. Last March 20, the girls were evaluated on point of their ability to walk jauntily on high heels, but they got precious little advice aside from "Attitude! Attitude!"

In addition, the girls were subjected to the indignity of walking in high heels—on a rice field's *pilapil*!

This was supposed to be a cute, clever touch, and it also purported to test the girls' determination to tackle any and all challenges. But, some of them slipped, got muddy, lost whatever vestiges of poise were left—and the sight wasn't funny, it was funny-pathetic.

Another challenge required the finalists to move like animals, integrating the wild creatures' behavior into their modeling style. Again, however, they weren't instructed but were left to their own devices in figuring this out, so the results were generally hapless instead of happy.

In the future, we hope the tilts' resident mentors will do some real mentoring, and not content themselves with evaluating the finalists and dissing them for their gaucheries.

Sure, the modeling world can be fiercely competitive, so only the truly charismatic, well-trained and determined women can survive—but the local situation is not that do-or-die, so cool it.

As for the would-be top models, we wish they wouldn't take rejection as emotionally as they have. Better than "Attitude! Attitude!," they should remind themselves: "Perspective! Perspective!"

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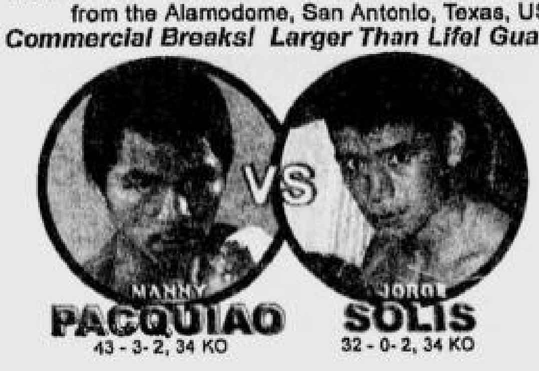

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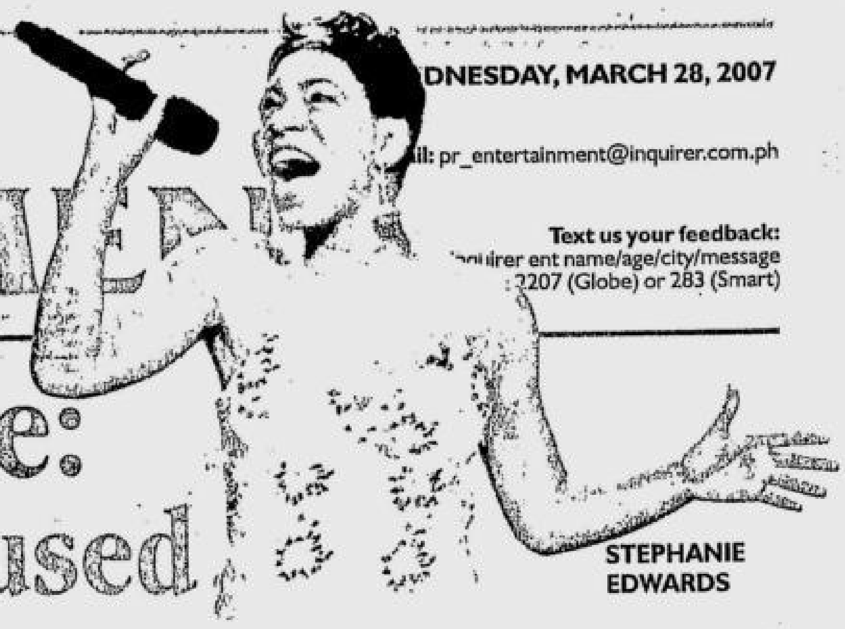

STEPHANIE EDWARDS

By Kathryn Fatima Reyes

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

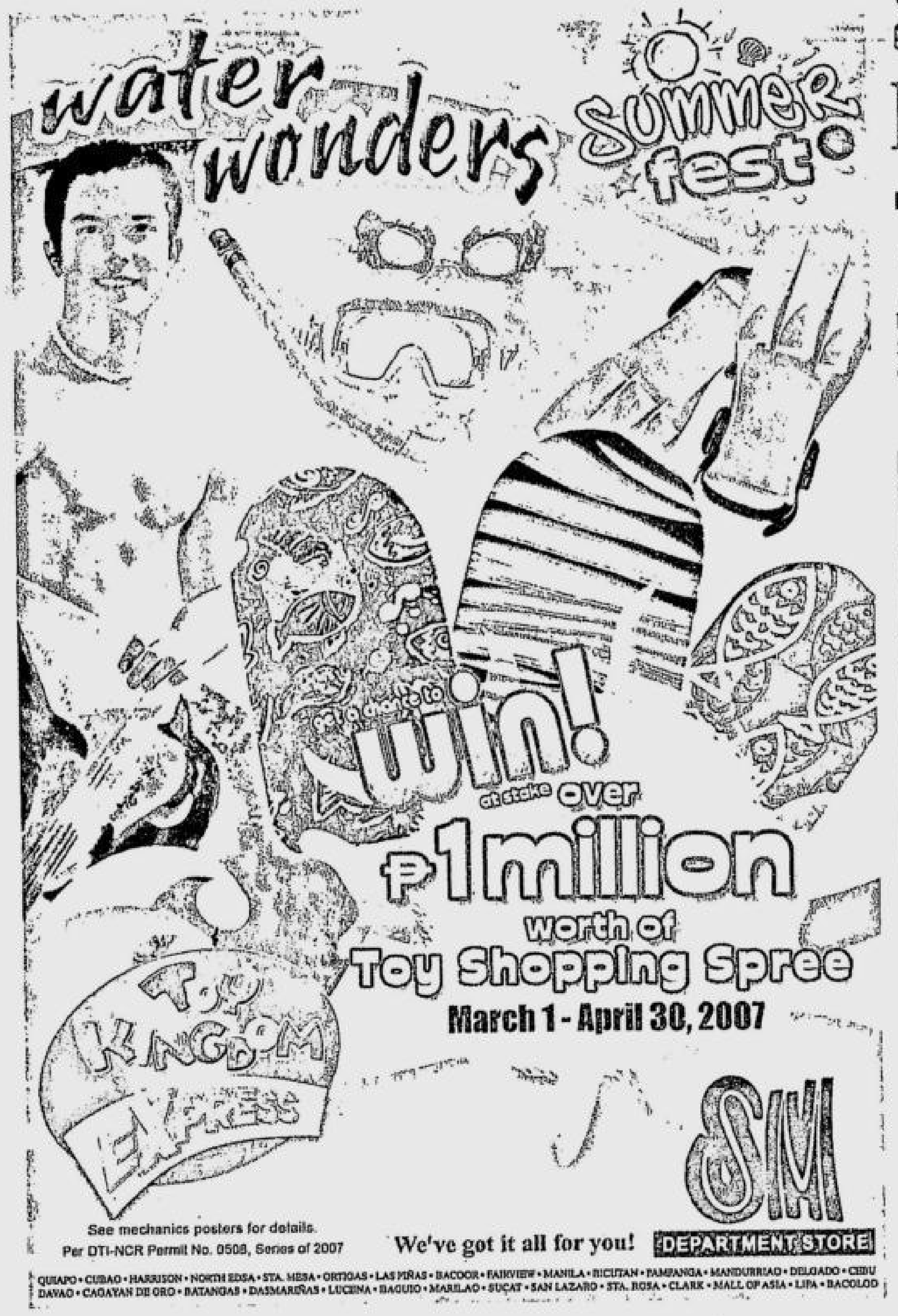
STEPHANIE EDWARDS, THE latest "American Idol" finalist to get the boot, said she had been confused by the judges' contradicting advice.

Earlier in the show, the three judges on the No. 1 reality TV talent search told the 19-year-old that upbeat songs suited her best. However, going into the Top 12, she said, they started comparing her to other contestants.

"I just kinda lost myself in the mix," Stephanie said in a Star World-sponsored conference call. Particularly, she was matched up with power performers Lakisha Jones and Melinda Doolittle.

"[So] I started trying to sing ballads and show off more vocals," Stephanie related. "I should have just stuck to what I did best, which is, put on a show and just perform and not so much of all the belt-

STEPHANIE/ G3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VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

AS WE WATCH "THE PHILIPPINES' NEXT TOP Model" on RPN-9, these thoughts come to mind: Perhaps the show's basic weakness is the fact that the modeling trade in the Philippines isn't as big as it is in other countries.

The psychological effect of this is, the stakes are smaller for the contenders, and even for the ultimate winner.

This has a dampening effect on the TV tilts' excitement level, so this viewer tended to watch the show with similarly reduced interest and involvement.

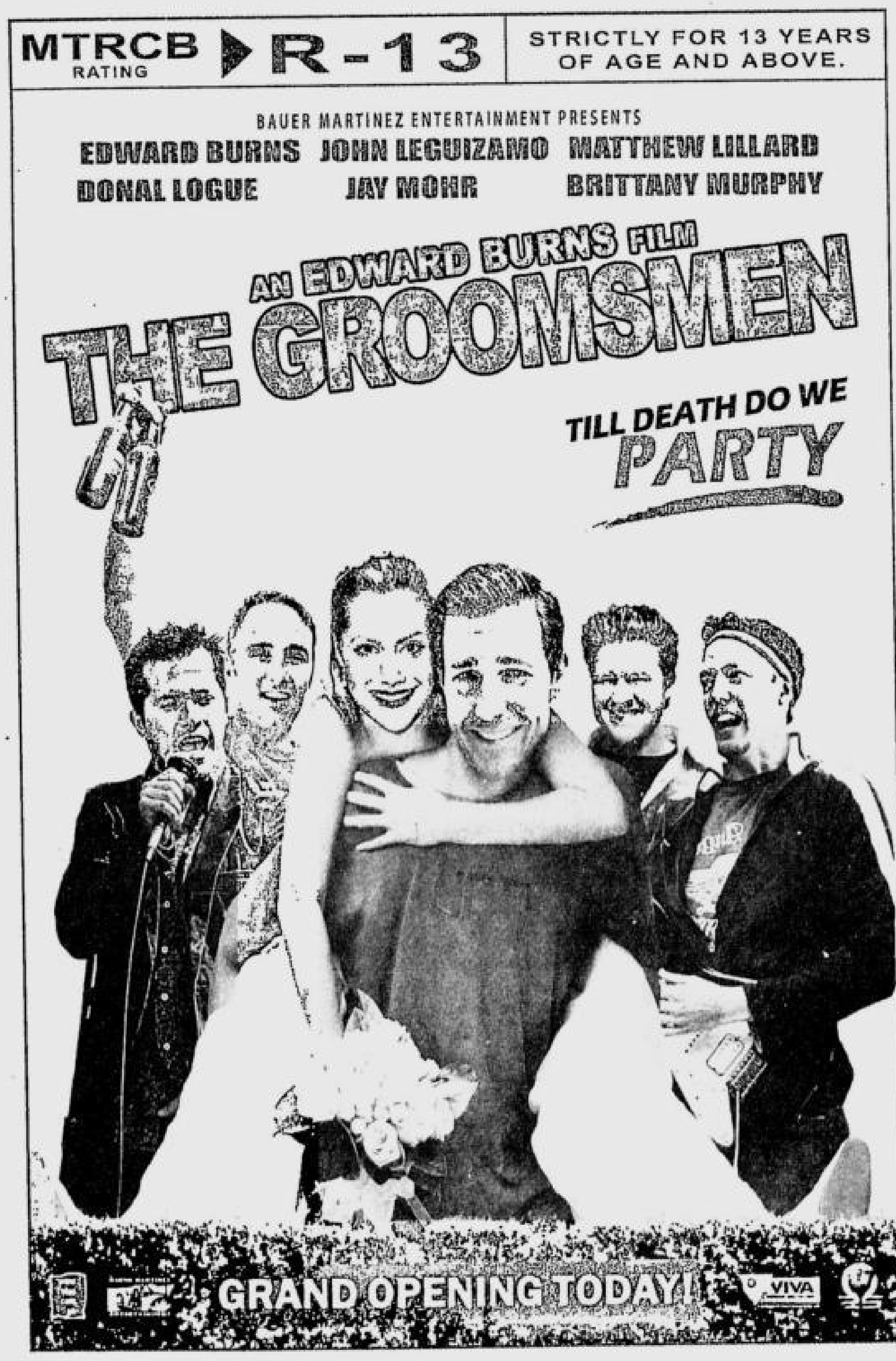
This suggests to us that not all hit foreign tilts should have localized versions.

Of course, people in the know will point out that the *international* modeling scene is much bigger and busier, and the local tilts' winner could also make it on the global level.

They tick off the names of Filipinas who *have* made it big as models in the States and Europe as proof of this. That's true, but that wonderful outcome is not assured.

More positively, however, we note that some three or four of the bets in the local tilt are stand-

ATTITUDE?/ G5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OPENING TODAY

From page G4

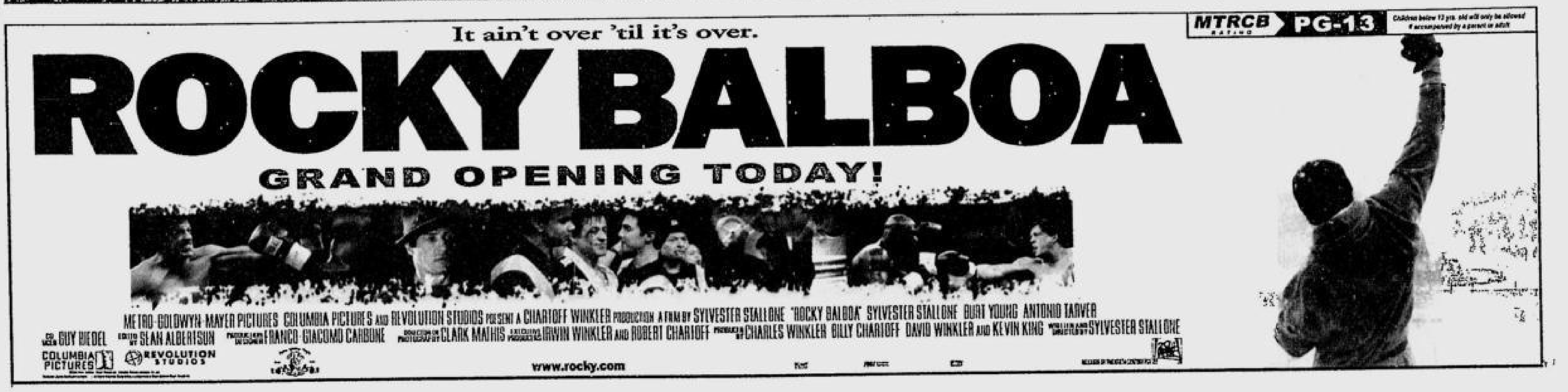
As the title suggests, this drama-comedy looks at an impending wedding from the point of view of the groom and his best buddies, who all seem to be having myriad crises of their own. Mike LaSalle of San Francisco Chronicle surmises that "this is the movie … Burns has been trying to make since [his Sundance winner and hit] 'The Brothers McMullen' 11 years ago." After watching this movie, Scott Fundas of Village Voice, wonders: "After six features, it's still impossible to tell if Burns is a filmmaker with something to say or merely one of the longest-running novelty acts in modern movies."

The Chanting

Stars Julie Estelle, Evan Sanders, Alice Iskak, Ratu Felisha

Directed by Rizal Mantovani

Originally entitled "Kuntilanak," this horror flick is a big hit in its native Indonesia. The title refers to the "kuntilanak" or "pontianak" legend—a Malay vampire, usually a woman who dies at childbirth. In this thriller, a traumatized coed (Estelle) moves to a strange village where she encounters all sorts of creepy occurrences—including ancient Javanese chants that lead to the disappearance of her boyfriend. An IMDb.com reviewer says it's "a fresh and creative take on … an urban legend that has shaped Indonesian culture and society for generations. Among the best new Indonesian movies." 24framespersecond.net relates that this film "took the capital city of Jakarta by storm …"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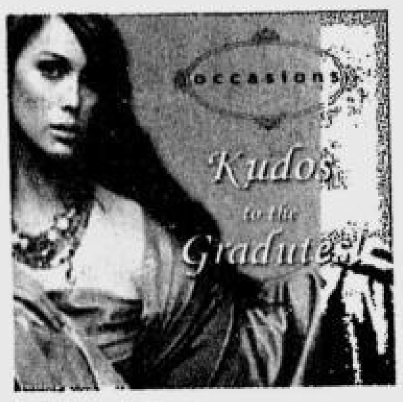
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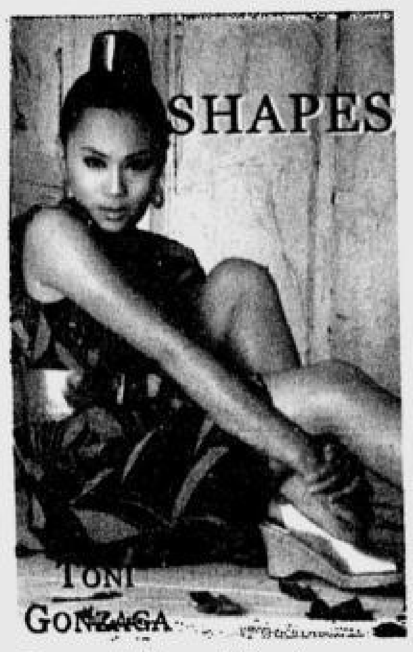
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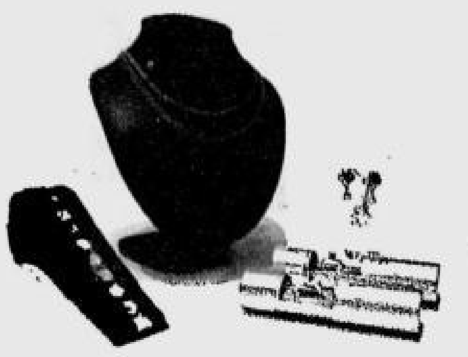

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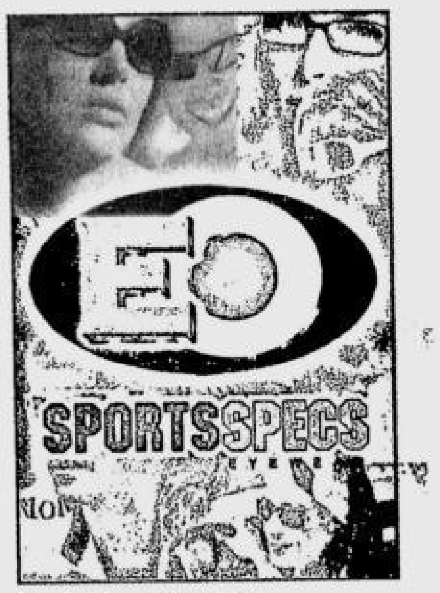
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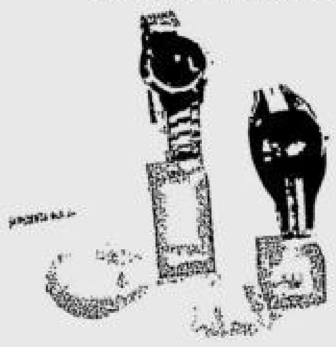

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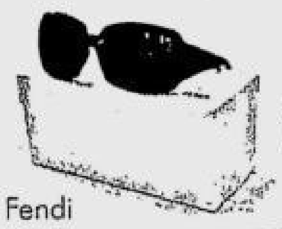

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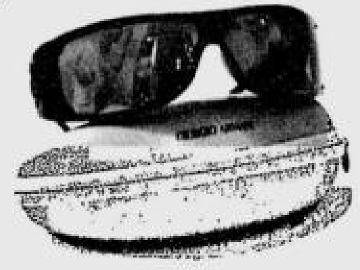

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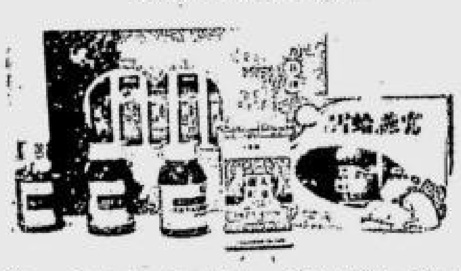

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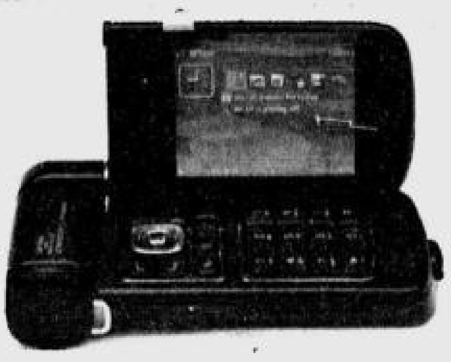

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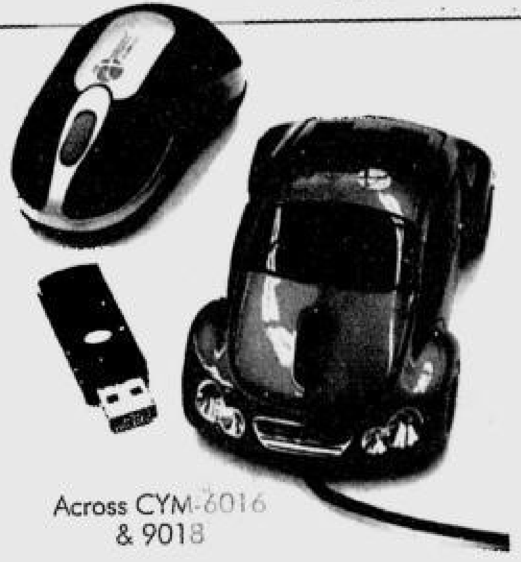

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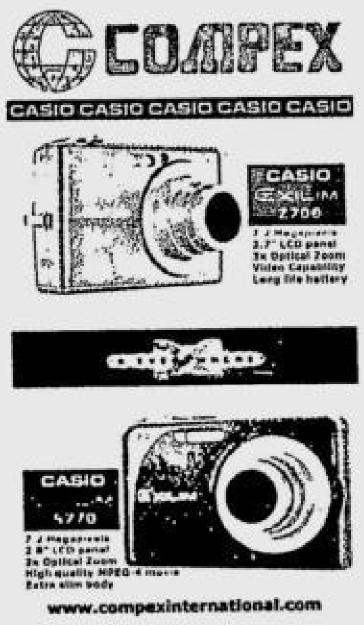

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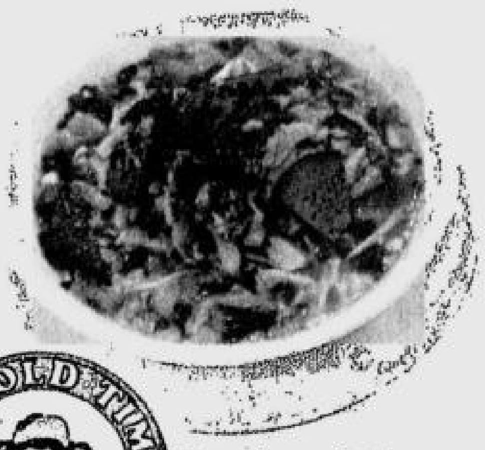

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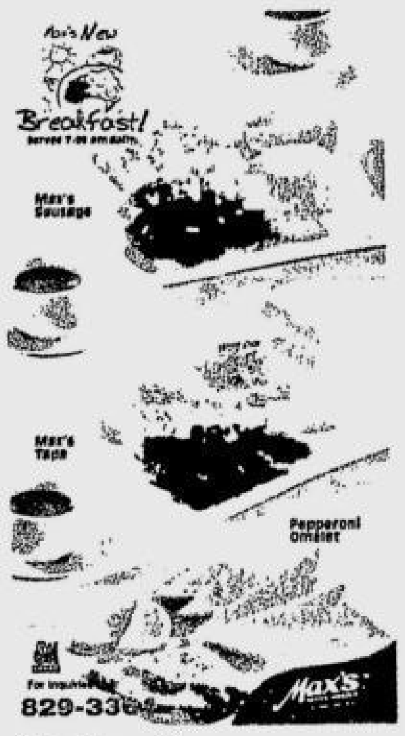
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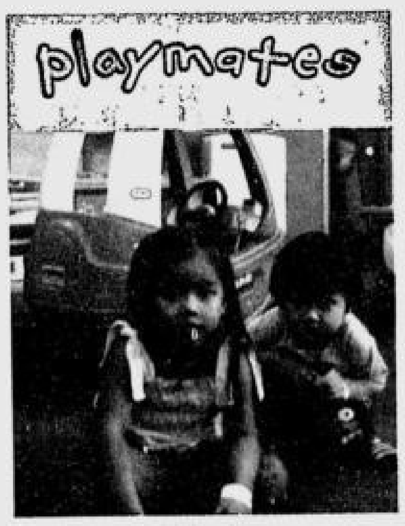

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